

Marina Hyde

Where are these brave race riot inciters? From Tommy to Elon, far, far away

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Lawyers fear for safety amid threats from far right

Rowena Mason
Vikram Dodd
Aletha Adu

Immigration lawyers have been warned to take extra security measures or stay away from work amid far-right threats to target their firms, with legal groups blaming political attacks on the profession for fueling abuse.

The Law Society and the Immigration Law Practitioners' Association (ILPA) said their members were at risk after a list of up to 60 immigration advice centres was circulated on Telegram with a message suggesting they should be the target of protests today.

Several prominent lawyers said the political rhetoric of Conservative politicians over the years, from Boris Johnson to Suella Braverman, demonising "lefty lawyers" for working on asylum cases had contributed to the far-right threat.

On a seventh day of violent disorder in areas of England and Northern Ireland, police chiefs said an extra 2,200 riot-trained officers would be deployed to combat the violence that has been erupting.

Keir Starmer held another Cobra meeting to coordinate the government's response with police chiefs, while Stephen Parkinson, the director of public prosecutions, said some of those causing the violent disorder could be charged with terrorism offences. After the meeting, Starmer promised communities they would be kept safe, saying: "We are doing everything we can to ensure that where a police response is needed, it's in place."

Violence so far has targeted mosques, community buildings such as libraries, hotels housing asylum seekers, and shops. But attention turned to the immigration law and advice centres after the circulation of a list of up to 60 centres this week.

Some of the addresses were later found to be wrong - with one occupied by an elderly woman.

The Labour MPs Stella Creasy and Sarah Sackman raised concerns over centres being named in their constituencies of Walthamstow and Finchley, saying they were in touch with police about the safety of residents.

The Community Security Trust, which monitors and investigates antisemitism in

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US athlete Cole Hocker stuns Josh Kerr of Team GB and Norway's Jakob Ingebrigtsen in the Olympic 1500m final
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Shock US winner leaves bitter rivals Kerr and Ingebrigtsen trailing

Harris picks 'impressive' Walz as running mate

David Smith Washington
Rachel Leingang
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Kamala Harris has named Tim Walz, the governor of Minnesota, as her running mate ahead of the November election. The decision ends intense

speculation over which candidate Harris, the de facto Democratic nominee for US president, would pick to go up against Donald Trump, the Republican nominee and former president, and his choice for vice-president, the Ohio senator JD Vance.

In their first public appearance together at a rally in Philadelphia,

just hours after the announcement, Harris said: "I set out to find a partner who can help build this brighter future." The two weeks since she stepped into the race have been "something of a whirlwind", she said, adding: "I'm here today because I've found such a leader."

Walz first ran for office in 2006 in a Republican-leaning congressional district, upsetting the incumbent. He kept the seat until he won the Minnesota governorship in 2018, then again in 2022. Under his leadership, the state has seen significant progressive legislative wins in recent years,

including universal school meals, legalised marijuana, abortion protections and gun control measures.

Before he entered public office, he was a geography teacher in Mankato, Minnesota. He also served in the army national guard for 24 years.

In an Instagram post, Harris said: "One of the things that stood out to me about Tim is how his convictions on fighting for middle-class families run deep. It's personal."

She cited his upbringing in Nebraska, and how after his father's death to cancer, his family relied on social security

Markets rally Share prices rise after rout

Analysts warn there could still be turmoil ahead after dramatic falls on Monday.

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News

Record £168m fine for three water firms over failure on sewage

Julia Kollewe
Sandra Laville

Thames, Yorkshire and Northumbrian Water will be fined a record £168m between them for a “catalogue of failure” over illegal sewage discharges into rivers and the sea after the industry regulator’s biggest investigation yet.

The water regulator for England and Wales, Ofwat, has proposed penalties of £104m for Thames, £47m for Yorkshire and £17m for Northumbrian for failing to manage their wastewater treatment works and networks. It said it was the first of more crackdowns to come.

Ofwat found that all three companies had “routinely” released sewage into rivers and seas, failing to ensure that discharges of sewage from storm overflows occurred only in exceptional circumstances, which had “resulted in harm to the environment and their customers”.

The watchdog also found a strong correlation between high spill levels and “operational issues at



wastewater treatment sites”. Nearly 70% of Thames’s treatment plants had operational problems, Ofwat said, and 16% of its storm overflows were operating in breach of their permits and therefore illegally. At Yorkshire, 16% of sewage works had operational problems and 45% of its storm overflows were in breach of their permits.

The £104m fine for Thames, which equates to 9% of the annual turnover of its wastewater operation, was announced as the company tries to secure its financial future after being put into special measures by Ofwat.

The investigation was prompted by public outcry over water companies breaking legal rules on when they are allowed to release raw sewage and took place after evidence was presented to MPs that suggested illegal dumping was 10 times higher than the regulators realised.

Last year, sewage spills in England increased by 54% from 2022, according to the Environment Agency, and some people are refusing to pay their water bills in response.

The Ofwat chief executive, David

Black, said: “Our investigation has shown how [the three companies] routinely released sewage into our rivers and seas, rather than ensuring that this only happens in exceptional circumstances as the law intends.”

“The level of penalties we intend to impose signals both the severity of the failings and our determination to take action to ensure water companies do more to deliver cleaner rivers and seas.”

Steve Reed, the environment secretary, welcomed Ofwat’s action. “The unacceptable destruction of our waterways should never have been allowed – and it is right that those responsible for illegally polluting our rivers, lakes and seas face the consequences,” he said.

He added that the government would fundamentally reform the water sector, announcing first steps to clean up the industry in its special measures bill.

Last month, Ofwat proposed that all water companies could raise bills by an average of £94 over five years to an average of £535 a year, described as “a bitter pill” by the chancellor,

▲ Ofwat said Thames, Yorkshire and Northumbrian Water routinely released sewage into rivers and the sea PHOTOGRAPH: CAMNEWS/ALAMY

Rachel Reeves, that reflected “14 years of failure from the Conservatives”. Under the proposals, companies are required to reduce spills from sewage overflows by 44% by 2030 compared with 2021 levels.

Thames said: “We take this matter very seriously and have cooperated at every stage of Ofwat’s investigation. We regard all untreated discharges as unacceptable, even when they are permitted, and are taking action to improve the health of our rivers as a key area of focus and investment.”

A Yorkshire spokesperson said: “We take our responsibility to protect the environment very seriously. Last year, we apologised for not acting quickly enough and announced our £180m programme to reduce discharges from our storm overflows before April 2025.

“We are disappointed with Ofwat’s response to their investigation into our wastewater treatment networks.”

It added that it had more robust procedures in place, and had finished work at 10 storm overflows with 44 on site, and 66 due to start soon.

Northumbrian also said it was disappointed by Ofwat’s decision, adding it does not “recognise some of the standards of compliance that Ofwat is enforcing. These are a departure from its previous practice and appear inconsistent with those of the Environment Agency and the government and with Ofwat’s own practice in the past. We’re working really hard to continue to deliver for customers and the environment and will continue to comply with and exceed government regulations.”

Nils Pratley, Business, page 32 →

Hundreds of harmful chemicals found in all English rivers

Leana Hosea
Rachel Salvidge

Hundreds of harmful chemicals, some of them banned, have been found in various mixtures across all 171 river and groundwater catchments tested in England in 2024, according to data from the Environment Agency (EA), analysed by the Guardian and Watershed Investigations.

About 250 are classified as very toxic, toxic or harmful to aquatic life, according to the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), and a banned carcinogenic “forever chemical” was among 20 “substances of very high concern” found.

“What this shows is that the way we monitor and manage chemicals in our rivers is completely unfit for purpose,” said Alistair Boxall, a professor

in environmental science at the University of York. “Although it depends on the concentrations, a lot of these are very toxic. We know they target algae, invertebrates and fish. If you’ve got a mixture of a few hundred substances, they are potentially working together and exacerbating the effect.”

Nick Measham, chief executive of WildFish conservation charity, said: “Our invertebrate monitoring shows clear evidence of significant chemical impact across all the 100-plus rivers we monitor ... It makes poo in rivers look like a second-order problem.”

Neonicotinoid pesticides are banned in the UK and EU for use on all outdoor crops because of the high risk to pollinators. But the data shows all three banned neonics across 29 river and groundwater catchments, including thiamethoxam, which the UK government has continued to allow for sugar beet crops. The EA said policies were being changed.

Another neonic, imidacloprid, is still legal as a flea treatment for pets. “Imidacloprid is like novichok for insects,” said Dave Goulson, a professor of biology at Sussex University. “A single teaspoon is enough to deliver a lethal dose to 1.25bn honey bees.”

Most is found downstream of sewage outlets, suggesting it is coming from owners washing pets. These chemicals are more toxic to insects than vertebrates, but research in

Switzerland has found neonics in the cerebral spinal fluid of children.

The most widespread chemicals are classic markers of road runoff, where pollutants from tyres, for example, build up on roads and then get washed into rivers when it rains. Fluoranthene, which is very toxic to aquatic life, and pyrene, were found in 80% of water catchments.

National Highways said: “Our water quality plan sets out a high-level programme of work to address all our high-risk outfalls by 2030.”

Farm runoff was another major source of contamination, with about 30% of substances found commonly



▲ About 30% of the chemicals were from farm runoff, such as pesticides

used as insecticides, fungicides, pesticides and medicines for livestock.

Sewage is the main reason the Medway catchment fails to meet good status, followed by agriculture, according to the EA. Together with the Tees estuary, it has the highest number of different chemicals in its waters. “Parts of the River Medway are no-go areas, where the river is devoid of life and we don’t fish there,” said Ian Tucker of the Royal Tunbridge Wells Angling Society.

Sewage works could install tertiary treatment to remove many chemicals, but it is expensive. A Water UK spokesperson said: “Water companies want to invest nearly £12bn to stop sewage spills from storm overflows and remove chemicals during the treatment process. We now need Ofwat to approve these plans in full so we can get on with it.”

Rob Collins of the Rivers Trust said: “The extent of chemical pollution of our waterways is staggering, impacting on aquatic life and raising implications for human health. It is imperative that we see a robust chemicals strategy from the government as a matter of urgency.”

An EA spokesperson said: “We are working closely with other regulators and the water industry on a series of chemical investigation programmes to better understand how chemical compounds affect our water environment.”

'It made me cry': climate crisis laid bare by return to glacier

Ajit Niranjana

A tourist has posted "staggering" pictures of himself and his wife at the same spot in the Swiss Alps almost exactly 15 years apart, in a pair of photos that highlight the speed with which global heating is melting glaciers.

Duncan Porter, a software developer from Bristol, posted photos taken at the Rhône glacier in August 2009 and August 2024. The white ice that filled the background has shrunk to reveal grey rock. A once-small pool at the bottom, out of sight in the original, has turned into a vast green lake. "Not gonna lie, it made me cry," Porter said in a viral post on X on Sunday night.

Porter and his wife, Helen, had taken the original photo from a viewpoint beside the Hotel Belvédère, perched on the side of a mountain road that once enjoyed magnificent views of the glacier.

The couple hung the original photograph up in their kitchen. This year, eager to return to the mountains and let their teenage daughters Maisie and Emily see the glacier, they took a camper van trip across Europe and set out to recreate the picture.

But when they got to the spot on the mountain road where they had taken the original picture, they found the hotel closed and the glacier drastically reduced.

"Obviously the circumstance of this photo was drastically different," said Porter. Helen, a nurse, added: "I thought it was really unbelievable."

The carbon pollution released by



burning fossil fuels and destroying nature has heated the planet by 1.3C since preindustrial times. In Europe, which has warmed twice as fast as the global average, hotter summers have led to people in mountainous regions seeing slow-moving glaciers melt before their eyes.

Switzerland has lost one-third of its glacier volume since 2000, according to official statistics, and 10% of the volume has disappeared in the last two years alone.

"A lot of people, when they see something like that, they feel quite helpless," said Porter, who sits on the committee of a local climate action

group in the south-west of England. "But from my experience there's a huge amount they can do."

He said he did "not want to sound preachy" but pointed to local community projects as one of the "wonderful" ways in which ordinary people can get involved in climate action, along with pushing for systemic change through the ways they vote and shop.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) found that - in its worst-case scenario for global heating - "nearly all glacier mass" would disappear in the coming centuries in low latitudes, central Europe,



▼ Duncan and Helen Porter in August 2009, left, and at the same spot at the Rhône glacier last week

PHOTOGRAPH: DUNCAN PORTER



'A lot of people, when they see something like that, they feel quite helpless'

Duncan Porter
On the glacier's disappearance

▼ The Rhône glacier and Hotel Belvédère in 1938, left, and as it appeared in August 2019 PHOTOGRAPH: ETH LIBRARY ZURICH; DENIS BALIBOUSE/REUTERS

the Caucasus, western Canada and the US, north Asia, Scandinavia and New Zealand.

The Rhône glacier has fared better than some others in Switzerland but has shrunk by about a quarter in the 15 years between Porter's two photos.

"It was a very impressive glacier," said Prof Sonia Seneviratne, a Swiss climate scientist and co-author of an IPCC report, who visited the glacier as a teenager. "It's very sad to see those pictures because you see how large the changes have been."

Users of X reacted with horror and heartbreak to Porter's post, which has been viewed 4m times, echoing the couple's anguish. But the post also attracted a steady stream of comments from climate denying-accounts subscribed to X's premium service, many of which were abusive and misrepresented established climate science.

Porter said he was aware that glaciers recede and grow over long timeframes but that many of the comments in his feed were inaccurate and based on dubious sources. "These things are supposed to happen over really long time periods," he said. "What people should focus on is the speed of change."

Cash converters: new Royal Mint factory turns tech into jewellery

Kalyeena Makortoff

The Royal Mint has revealed a "pioneering" new factory that will recover gold from electronic waste, creating a more sustainable source of metal for the coin manufacturer's luxury jewellery line.

The factory in south Wales, which



Gold is used in the circuit boards of laptops

has been under construction since March 2022, is designed to extract gold from up to 4,000 tonnes a year of circuit boards sourced in the UK from electronics including phones, laptops and TVs.

The Royal Mint has said the process could provide hundreds of kilograms of gold each year for its 886 jewellery range, named after the year the Mint was founded. The range, launched in 2022, sells high-end rings, necklaces and earrings.

The Royal Mint will process the circuit boards in a specialised plant that separates the components and metals. The pieces containing gold

will then be sent on to the south Wales factory.

The factory in Llantrisant will use patented new chemistry to recover the gold. A washing machine-style spinning drum washes the pieces of circuitry containing gold in a special acid mix that dissolves the precious metal in four minutes. Other gold extraction processes are more energy intensive and tend to require extremely high temperatures over a longer period.

It is estimated that about 600 mobile phones will have to be processed to create one of the 7.5g gold rings sold in the 886 collection,

similar to the weight of a £1 coin. The Mint said it expected to use the recovered gold in other parts of the business in the future, including for its commemorative coins.

The factory is part of the Mint's efforts to diversify its business as cash use declines. It is owned by the Treasury and pays a dividend to the government each year, with remaining profits reinvested in the business.

"The Royal Mint is transforming for the future, and the opening of our precious metals recovery factory marks a pivotal step in our journey," said the chief executive, Anne Jessopp.

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National
Far-right riots

Immigration lawyers warned to be vigilant amid far-right threats

Continued from page 1

Britain, has also warned that the Jewish community may be targeted and raised concerns over attacks.

The Law Society of England and Wales has written to Starmer and Shabana Mahmood, the justice secretary, warning that a “direct assault on our legal profession is a direct assault on our democratic values”.

Its president, Nick Emmerson, told the Guardian that immigration lawyers were providing an accessible service and were frightened about “a very real frontline threat”.

He said political attacks on lawyers under the previous government had “contributed to the atmosphere of intimidation”, and that this was “an extension of that, and it is a physical manifestation of that”, adding: “Who knows if it is going to last more than one day? People are being asked to mask up on one day.”

“That’s distressing enough but if this is a way of doing business going forward that is not sustainable. This fundamentally should not be happening at all.”

Mahmood, the lord chancellor, said: “Every day, across the country, solicitors uphold the rule of law. Inciting mobs to attack their offices, or threatening them in any way, is unacceptable. Those found doing so will face the full force of the law. They will join the hundreds of others who have already been arrested by police within the last week.”

Dominic Grieve, a former Conservative attorney general, said: “I’m afraid that immigration lawyers being targeted does suggest to me this is one of the consequences of politicians having attacked them in the past ... I think it would be a very good thing to do to say lawyers uphold the rule of law.”

Jacqueline McKenzie, a lawyer for Leigh Day, who was previously the target of a Tory dossier attacking her work for migrant clients, said the political attacks on immigration lawyers had put them at risk. “It all started with the attacks on lefty lawyers ... to bring us into the fray has put a target on our backs,” she said.

She said Starmer should do more to counter the toxic narrative around immigration and that the current response had been “mealy mouthed” from the government.

“Governments are just going to keep on making the same mistakes; allowing people to attribute all problems to migrants will fuel a race war, and put all black and brown people, not just immigration lawyers, at risk,” McKenzie said.

Hazar El-Chamaa, the chair of trustees at the ILPA, said the group stood in solidarity with migrants and called on the government to support lawyers performing their professional

Targets posted online Nottingham family plea

A granddaughter has pleaded for far-right groups planning to target immigration advice centres to avoid protesting at her 88-year-old grandmother’s house after it was included in a list of targets shared on social media.

Tammy posted a family photo on X, which said her grandmother’s address has been included in a list targeting immigration centres, lawyers’ offices and charities.

It read: “The far right fascist groups are now targeting immigration services across the UK. They have published my nana’s address as their Nottingham target on Wednesday.”

The address is thought to be one of at least 39 earmarked as part of the mass co-ordinated far-right demonstrations today.

Tammy said on X that her father is a freelance immigration advisor, and that his business address is registered at her grandmother’s house in West Bridgford, where she lives alone.

Tammy also said her grandmother had suffered a collapsed lung earlier this year and has lost a lot of her mobility.

She added: “I have no words to describe how it feels watching the hate unfold back home, let alone worrying about the safety of my family.”

Nottinghamshire police said the address has no links to any immigration business, and “strongly advise that those wishing to attend a protest in this location refrain from doing so”.
Mabel Banfield-Nwachi



Friends in Nottingham,

My dad is a freelance immigration advisor. His business address is registered at my Nana’s house in West Bridgford where she lives by herself.

The far right fascist groups are now targeting immigration services across the UK.

They have published my Nana’s address as their Nottingham target on Wednesday night at 8pm.

duties by “representing and upholding the human rights of migrants and those targeted based on their appearance, without fear for our safety”.

Police chiefs have decided to sharply increase the number of riot officers deployed after violence over the weekend continued on Monday and yesterday.

They are also braced for potentially 30 different demonstrations planned for today, and are assessing the credibility of an online document listing targets, many of which are connected to immigration and asylum.

Almost 4,000 riot officers have already been deployed across England and Wales. Some faced violence in their own force area, and some were sent to help out other forces that were under strain over the weekend.

Yvette Cooper, the home secretary, told chief constables in a call yesterday that their forces would receive support for overtime pay and any other resources they required when dealing with public disorder.

In total there are 18,000 specially trained public order or riot officers in England and Wales. The decision to increase the number deployed means 30% of the total will be working. A police source said the number would be adjusted up or down as the situation develops.

Preparations were under way to deal with more trouble today.

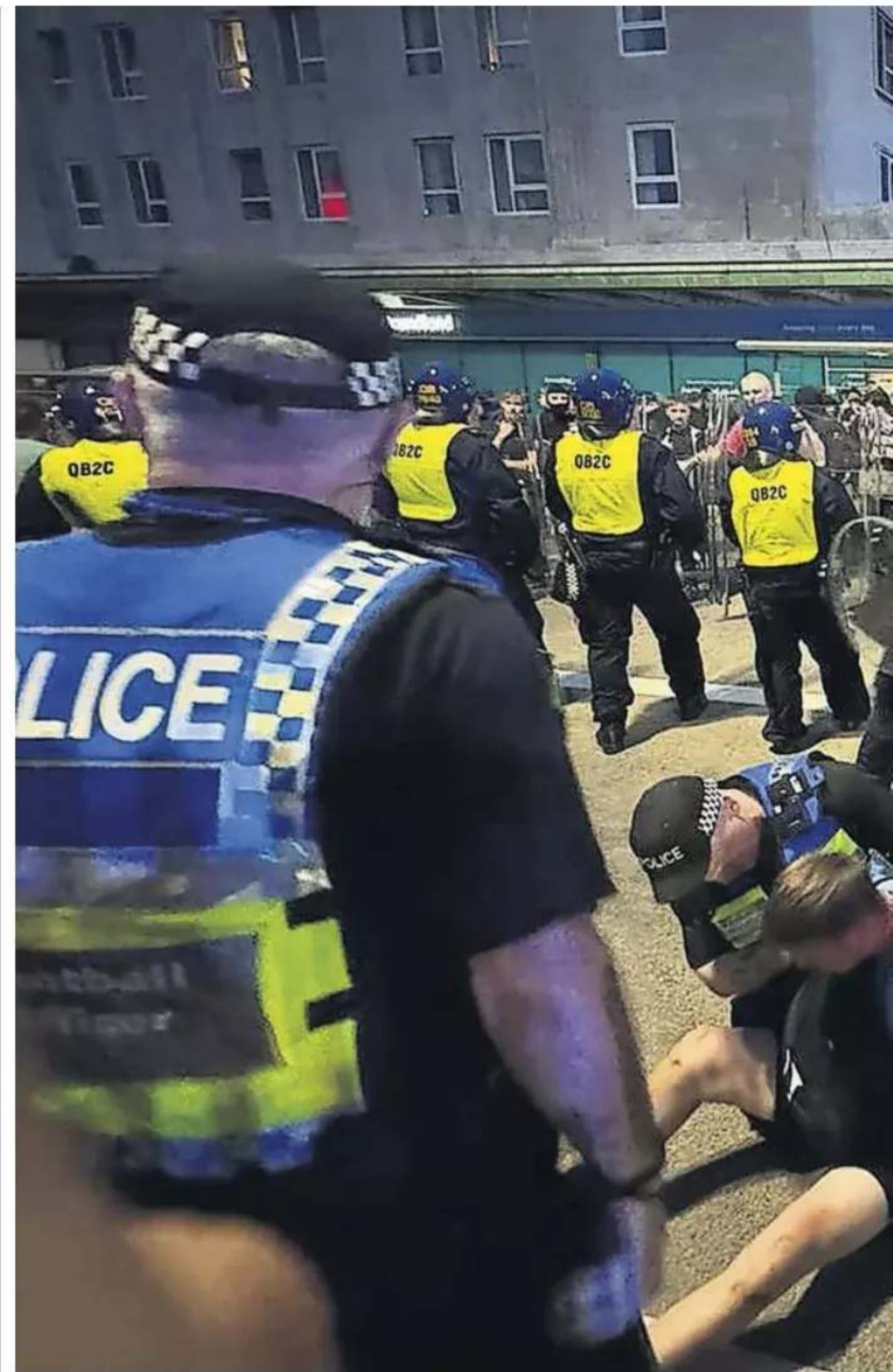
More than 400 arrests have so far been made and the police source said while some violence was planned, a lot of those joining in were locals who decided to participate when they heard about the disorder.

Nigel Farage, the leader of Reform, has been criticised for questioning whether the police were being transparent about the murder of three girls in Southport after the suspect was wrongly named on social media as a Muslim migrant. A Cardiff-born 17-year-old was later charged. However, anti-migrant riots spread from Southport over the following week.

Farage said yesterday he had “nothing to do with any form of street violence now or at any point” in his career and claimed the riots after the Southport murders “were as bad as they were because we weren’t told the truth” by police. He said: “The level of incitement against me has led to a huge increase in my security.”

The Reform MP for Clacton told LBC “there were stories online from some very prominent folks with big followings, Andrew Tate etc suggesting the man [murder suspect] had crossed the Channel in a boat in October 2023, other suggestions that he was an active Muslim and much of this led to the riots we saw”.

He said “there were thousands of fake reports everywhere ... I didn’t believe any of it” and insisted he had posed a “legitimate” question.



‘Thuggery on tour’ Violence in Plymouth blamed on outsiders

Caroline Davies

As rioters hurled bricks, bottles and fireworks in a frenzy of violence in Plymouth, on Monday, members of the local mosque were taking no chances. Riots, which have scarred so many communities in the past week, broke out on the high street as 150 officers in riot gear and with dogs sought to keep apart far-right anti-migrant protesters and Stand up to Racism demonstrators in the city centre.

Battles were fought near shops in Royal Parade opposite the Guildhall and the surrounding area in what one senior officer described as “sustained violence”.

Just 15 minutes walk away, members of the local mosque were braced. About 50 to 60 members

had turned up to protect the Plymouth Islamic Education Trust (Piety) building, which houses the mosque where 1,000 people regularly attend Friday prayers, said the director of the centre, Mohamed Muganzi.

Muganzi added: “They came of their own volition because they were worried enough about what might happen. They had seen what had happened elsewhere.”

Last week someone smashed the door to the centre, an act captured on CCTV, and which Muganzi said he believed had been motivated by what was happening in other towns. On Monday, Piety hired private security.

Those community members who turned up to protect the building were “the second line of defence, after the police”, said Muganzi. Thankfully, he said, they were not needed as the building was not targeted. “But it really breaks my heart that there are



▲ Police officers detain people during the disorder by far-right rioters in Plymouth on Monday

PHOTOGRAPH: ANADOLU/GETTY IMAGES

some community members who feel this afraid," he added. Police and council leaders met Muslim community representatives yesterday to offer support and reassurance. The police, said Muganzi, did a "tremendous job".

Three police officers sustained minor injuries, a police van was damaged, and two members of the public were taken to hospital following the clashes that occurred on Monday evening.

Six people have so far been arrested in connection with the violence, during which bricks were torn up from pavements and fireworks set off. More arrests were likely to follow as Devon and Cornwall police appealed for phone footage to help identify those involved. Nikki Leaper, an assistant chief constable, said that she was "absolutely" expecting more arrests.

Among those who had featured in social media posts from the anti-migrant protest earlier was Nick Tenconi, the interim leader of Ukip, who was filmed in Plymouth shouting out slogans using a loudspeaker.

By yesterday the only visible evidence of what had occurred was a smashed window at the shop TK Maxx in Royal Parade. City council staff reported at 4am for clean-up duty in the city centre and the areas around the Hoe, with mechanical

sweepers cleaning up debris from rocks and glass bottles together with small paving stones that had been ripped from the ground. There were also a number of damaged bins.

As people began arriving for work at 8am, the team of nine had completely cleaned up a huge area.

"It is thanks to their magnificent efforts, Plymouth is once again looking spick and span in the summer sunshine," said Sally Haydon, the council's cabinet member for community safety.

Jemma Laing, deputy leader of Plymouth city council, called the violence "thuggery on tour" with many people coming from outside the city to cause trouble. She blamed the riots on a "small

minority of thugs" who would be brought to justice.

"While most protesters were peaceful, we are appalled by a small number of individuals who engaged in aggressive, violent and abusive behaviour," she said. "I remain incredibly angry on behalf of Plymouth that so many people from outside our city felt emboldened to come here and cause disruption and unrest. Thuggery on tour is not acceptable."

In a statement, Devon and Cornwall police said: "Our approach to this operation was to enable peaceful protests, but people who were intent on committing public order or criminal offences have been, and will be, dealt with robustly. This is the style of policing that we have delivered and what our communities expect.

"Violence will not be tolerated, hate will not be tolerated, and we will continue to work with our partners to keep the people of Devon, Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly safe and reduce anti-social behaviour.

"We will continue to take positive action against individuals in breach of the law, and have carried out arrests for a range of public order offences and assaults following [these] events. We will also be following up on post-investigative inquiries."



▲ Anti-racism activists gathering at Guildhall square in the city



Muslims Community leaders urge restraint in response

Harriet Sherwood

▲ Hundreds of people came out to protect local shops and a mosque in Bordesley Green in Birmingham on Monday PHOTOGRAPH: STOP PRESS/ALAMY

Muslim community leaders have urged restraint amid signs of a growing readiness to defend mosques, businesses and homes using violence if necessary after a week of aggression from the far right.

On Monday, several hundred Muslim men, some wearing balaclavas or masks, gathered in the Bordesley area of Birmingham as threats of an imminent attack by the English Defence League (EDL) and other far-right activists circulated on social media.

A Sky News journalist was reporting live from the area when a protester interrupted her broadcast shouting "Free Palestine" and "Fuck the EDL".

West Midlands police confirmed that a "large number of people" had gathered in Bordesley but that there were no clashes between groups. The force said it was investigating reports of an assault, criminal damage to a pub, a car that had its windows smashed, a vehicle that had its tyres damaged and a man in possession of an offensive weapon.

In Bolton, about 300 people joined a counter-protest against far-right activists on Sunday, resulting in skirmishes between the two groups and police. Shakeel Afsar, who stood as an independent candidate in Birmingham Hall Green and Moseley in last month's general election, said "reasonable force" may be needed to defend communities.

"We are not the agitators, aggressors or attackers," he said in a video posted on X. "We will stand there and defend our businesses and our homes. And if attacked, we will use reasonable and necessary force to defend ourselves. It's about defending the rights of our community and the honour of our people."

Baber Baz, a Liberal Democrat councillor in Birmingham who was at the protest in Bordesley, said it was largely peaceful after a day of threats of an imminent attack. "Hour by hour the tension was increasing. We've seen what's happened in other

cities. We won't allow it to happen in Birmingham. The EDL messages were out there. If they turn up and become violent, you're within your rights to defend yourself."

Baz also defended the presence of Palestinian flags at the gathering. "The Muslim community feels its voice is not being heard, locally, nationally or internationally. Muslim voices are silenced. So people will highlight whatever issue is important to them."

He said the army should be deployed to reinforce police action and to end the unrest. Others in Birmingham's Muslim community urged restraint. Haniya Adam of Green Lane masjid said that, in the light of messages and threats on social media, there was a natural instinct to protect the community.

She said: "Our messaging was very clear: allow the police to do their work. We don't use the language of violence. Our first response is to pray, to call on a higher being and ask for protection for everyone in the country. I do understand the position of people in the community who say we need to defend ourselves, but you can't put out a fire with fire."

Qari Asim, the chair of the Mosques and Imams National Advisory Board (Minab), said: "The attacks have naturally angered and frightened many in the Muslim community. Many young Muslim people want to defend themselves and their institutions.

"At Minab, we have issued guidance that none should take the law into their own hands. It's the job of the police and other authorities to protect individuals and mosques, and we should support them rather than become a hindrance. The extreme far right wants to provoke Muslims and reinforce divisions and see violent clashes on our streets. We must not hand over what the extremists desire."

Far-right extremists are threatening to head to Birmingham on Saturday, when Birmingham City are playing Reading at home. "Our mosque is right opposite the ground," said Adam. "The police have reassured us there will be a heavy presence, but we're looking at the situation hour by hour."

Shabana Mahmood, the justice secretary and a Birmingham MP, appealed for people to stay away from unrest and "let the police get on with their vital work".

▼ Firefighters tackle a blaze in Croydon, south London, in 2011
PHOTOGRAPH: DAN KITWOOD/GETTY



Law and disorder

How do the riots and the response compare to 2011?

David Batty
Rajeev Syal

The sight of scurrying looters and widespread rioting across multiple English cities may be an unusual one, but the disorder has a 21st-century precedent in another overheated August. The television images will take many back to the 2011 riots that engulfed London before spreading to other cities and were seen as the worst week of public disorder to hit Britain for 200 years. We examine the parallels and differences between riots that happened 13 years apart.

How widespread was the violent disorder, and where?

The 2011 riots lasted for four days, centred on London, and saw some of the most intense civil unrest in recent English history.

It began as a small scale disorder in Tottenham, north London. By Monday 8 August, 22 of the 32 London boroughs were affected by disturbances the Metropolitan police described as “unprecedented in the capital’s history” including in Ealing, where Richard Bowes, 68, was critically injured after confronting looters.

On the fourth night, London was quieter, but the disorder had

spread to Gloucester, Liverpool, Nottingham and Birmingham, where three local Muslim men were killed while protecting shops. The most widespread disturbances took place in Greater Manchester.

More than 3,000 arrests were made, with more than 2,000 facing criminal charges. The cost was estimated at more than £400m.

The 2024 violence began last Tuesday in Southport but quickly spread to more than a dozen towns and cities across England. The next day, groups attacked the police in London, Manchester, Hartlepool and Aldershot. The disorder continued with clashes on Saturday in Liverpool, Blackpool, Hull, Stoke-on-Trent, Leeds, Nottingham, Bristol and Belfast.

On Sunday, rioters tried to set fire to a hotel housing asylum seekers in Rotherham. Later, in Tamworth, a similar incident played out at a Holiday Inn Express hotel, where reports suggested asylum seekers were also being housed, with fires, smashed windows and missiles thrown at officers. In Middlesbrough, rioters smashed the windows of houses and cars. This week, it has spread to Plymouth and Darlington.

Police are investigating several racist attacks connected to the riots including a video circulated online of a mob of rioters in Hull attacking



an Asian man in his car. In Belfast, a man in his 50s was taken to hospital after he was seriously assaulted.

There have been more than 400 arrests with numbers expected to rise. The damage is not considered to be as extensive – so far – as the riots 13 years earlier.

What were the triggers?

Mark Duggan, a 29-year-old mixed-race British man, was shot dead by police on 4 August 2011. Police claimed officers were attempting to arrest him under suspicion of a planned armed attack. An illegal firearm was found over a fence near where he was shot. His family

▲ A burnt-out car in Toxteth, Liverpool, in the aftermath of the 2011 riots that spread from London
PHOTOGRAPH: STRINGER/AFP/GETTY

maintained he was unarmed and had been unlawfully killed.

On 29 July 2024, Bebe King, six, Elsie Dot Stancombe, seven, and Alice Dasilva Aguiar, nine, were killed in a multiple stabbing at a Taylor Swift-inspired dance class in Southport. Eight other children sustained knife wounds with five left in a critical condition. Two adults were also critically hurt.

Axel Rudakubana, 18, who was born in Cardiff and had been living



▲ Far-right young people attack a hotel being used to house asylum seekers in Rotherham on Sunday
PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTOPHER FURLONG/GETTY

in Banks, a village a few miles north of Southport, has been charged with three counts of murder and 10 counts of attempted murder.

What was the role of disinformation?

Rumours fuelled the riots of 2011, via the BBM network – a free mobile phone messaging service open to anyone with a BlackBerry phone. Claims that a 16-year-old girl was punched to the ground by police during a peaceful demonstration against the death of Duggan circulated on social media during the first days of disturbances.

In Lewisham, south London, 200 “nationalists” were falsely said to be marauding through the streets, according to the BBC, while there were unfounded rumours that Canary Wharf was on “amber alert” and that Portsmouth’s Gunwharf Quays shopping centre was ablaze.

In 2024, false claims were used to mobilise protesters in Southport around claims that the three girls had been murdered by a Muslim asylum seeker who had arrived in the UK by small boat. Some claimed it was a terrorist attack that was suppressed by the government.

Southport mosque was attacked, suggesting the rioters may have been influenced by the unfounded online accusations. Merseyside police said disinformation online played a part in the violence.

Police were forced to put out statements over the weekend correcting claims that had been amplified by Tommy Robinson, including that two protesters in Stoke had been stabbed “by Muslims” and that an “alleged Muslim stabbed at least three women in Stirling”.

What do we know about the rioters?

Some of the recent disorder appears to have been directed by the far right. Many participants shouted racist, Islamophobic and anti-immigration slogans. The anti-fascism organisation Hope Not Hate described the unrest as possibly “the worst wave of far-right violence in the UK post war”.

► The police force, pictured here in Middlesbrough on Sunday, has far more officers in 2024 than in 2011
PHOTOGRAPH: GARY CALTON/THE OBSERVER

Tell Mama, a monitoring group that tracks Islamophobic hate crimes, said the extreme rightwing activity in the past week has led to a fivefold increase in threats to Muslims compared with the same period last year. The charity said 10 mosques had faced attacks or threats, including places of worship in Southport, Liverpool and Hartlepool. It said people had been left too scared to leave their homes and that women wearing head coverings such as the hijab faced threats in the street.

Counter-demonstrations have taken place, including the mobilisation of young Muslim men in Bolton and Birmingham.

Most rioters in 2011 were young and male. Ministry of Justice data from 2011 revealed that where ethnicity was recorded, 37% of those appearing in the courts on riot-related charges were white, 40% were black and 6% Asian. Their ethnic profile largely mirrored their local areas.

How many officers were available?

Police chiefs have said an extra 2,200 riot-trained officers will be deployed to combat the recent violence. Almost 4,000 riot officers have already been deployed. Some faced violence in their own area, and some assisted other forces that were under strain.

As of 31 March 2024, there were 147,746 full-time-equivalent officers in post across the 43 police forces in England and Wales. This is the highest number of officers since comparable records began in the year ending March 2003.

In contrast, the number of police officers in post in England and Wales on 30 September 2011 – about two months after that year’s riots – was the lowest number recorded since 2002. There were 136,261 full-



time-equivalent police officers in post, a reduction of 6,012 or 4.2% compared with September 2010.

How has the justice system dealt with the riots?

The riots come amid an overcrowding crisis in prisons. Prisons have been routinely operating at more than 99% capacity since the start of 2023, with only hundreds of places left in the adult male estate.

The justice minister Heidi Alexander said the government had introduced 567 additional prison places, due to come forward at the end of the month.

As of 2 August, the prison population in England and Wales was 87,362, according to government figures. The Ministry of Justice said the maximum number of prisoners that could be held was 88,832, meaning there were 1,350 spare places.

In comparison, jails were less overcrowded in 2011: the prison population was 86,131, with scope to hold an additional 3,341 inmates.

In the aftermath of the 2011 riots, inspectors concluded that adult prisons coped well with the influx of those convicted. But some youth jails were more adversely affected, with an increase in group fights as new inmates formed gangs.

Magistrates’ courts were asked to sit for 24 hours as the justice system worked to sentence more than 3,000 people arrested during the disorder. By 10 August 2012, 2,138 people were found guilty and sentenced – 69% of those brought before the courts, according to Ministry of Justice analysis.

Alexander said courts in England could adopt a similar approach – sitting through the night – in 2024.

How did politicians respond?

Keir Starmer rejected calls by MPs and 60 anti-racist and migrants’ rights organisations for parliament to be recalled to address the violence. However, the Northern Ireland assembly will be recalled this week to discuss Saturday’s violent scenes in which several businesses were attacked at an anti-immigration protest in Belfast.

Starmer chaired an emergency meeting with police chiefs and ministers on Monday. He said a “standing army” of specialist police officers was being assembled to crack down on rioting. In a televised address on Sunday he said rioters would “regret” engaging in “far-right thuggery”.

The home secretary, Yvette Cooper, said urgent measures had been brought in offer extra protection to mosques.

In 2011, the prime minister, David Cameron, said there was “no justification for the aggression the police and the public faced”. The home secretary, Theresa May, said: “Such disregard for public safety and property will not be tolerated.”

The government subsequently established the riots, communities and victims panel to explore the causes of the disorder and how to avoid similar disturbances in future. It said a lack of confidence in the police response to the initial riots in London led to further disturbances across England.

Belfast Man in serious condition after brutal attack

Josh Halliday
Mark Brown

A man is in a serious condition after being attacked in a suspected hate crime in Belfast, police said, as others were arrested and charged with race-related offences for the first time since the riots began in England and Northern Ireland last week.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) said the man, in his 50s, was in hospital after attackers allegedly stamped on his head. It came on a second night of disorder in Belfast as part of the riots that have spread across England and Northern Ireland since three young girls were killed in a knife attack in Southport on 29 July.

A 28-year-old man was the first to be charged with stirring up racial hatred as police began to crack down. West Yorkshire police said the charges related to Facebook posts allegedly made by Jordan Parlour last week in connection with the riots.



▲ Joe MacKenzie, left, and Liam Grey, accused of taking part in riots

Online forums Experts warn Jewish people being targeted

Vikram Dodd

Police and crime correspondent

Online spaces being used to incite and organise the far-right led riots contain messages encouraging followers to consider Jewish people as a target, community security experts have warned.

One forum, which was key to organising the first so-called protest that turned into a riot last Tuesday in Southport, is allegedly jointly run by a suspected neo-Nazi. He is believed to be based overseas.

He is alleged to have called previously for attacks overseas on Jewish places of worship, according to research by the Community Security Trust (CST).

Last year he was reported to the police for alleged encouragement of violent antisemitism. One message in the forum attacks Jews and “Gypsies” and insults both groups.

The CST monitors and investigates

Two others, a 32-year-old man and a 34-year-old woman from Chester, were arrested on suspicion of racially aggravated harassment with intent to cause fear and violence.

More than 36 people appeared in courts across England yesterday charged with offences linked to the riots, which started in Southport a week ago before spreading to other towns including Hartlepool, Rotherham, Liverpool, and Middlesbrough.

At Teesside magistrates court, in Middlesbrough, three courtrooms were allocated to hear an expected 28 cases involving defendants aged 16 to 56, all of them local to the area.

The majority of those faced violent disorder charges. They included Thomas Rodgers, who pleaded guilty to throwing rocks at police during the disorder in Middlesbrough. Rodgers, who said he was homeless, was remanded in custody until 27 August.

Joe Mackenzie, 28, from Darlington, was to be remanded in custody for his alleged part in rioting on Sunday, accused of being with about 20 men wearing face coverings who clashed with police. He denies using or threatening unlawful violence.

A number of cases were later transferred to a magistrates court in South Shields. Cleveland police said they had made 62 arrests since the disorder in Hartlepool and Middlesbrough.

Four men, and two boys, aged 16 and 17, appeared before Sheffield magistrates over alleged involvement in a riot outside a hotel housing asylum seekers in Rotherham on Sunday.

Joshua Simpson, a builder, was the first person to be convicted after the disorder in which people tried to set fire to the Holiday Inn Express. Liam Grey, 20, was refused bail for allegedly trying to take a riot shield from an officer as he pushed against the police line near the hotel. He denied violent disorder.

antisemitism in Britain and provides safety advice to Jewish communities. It works closely with the police and Muslim groups. A CST spokesperson said: “There are some people in this movement and their online spaces encouraging others to consider Jews as a target, as well as everyone else they have identified so far.”

The CST said security for places such as synagogues, Jewish schools and community halls is already high.

There was a large spike in antisemitic incidents recorded by the CST after the Gaza conflict began in October 2023. From that month to December, the number of antisemitic incidents recorded was up to five times higher compared with the same period in 2022.

The British far right is using propaganda that spreads lies about Muslims and asylum seekers to gain supporters. Its historic enmity towards Jewish people is less prominent.

The CST spokesperson said: “We see this kind of antisemitic chat from the far right all the time in a variety of online forums. The difference right now is it is now in online spaces which are also being used by people who are going out and who are actually involved in violent disorder.”

On Sunday the Guardian revealed hate crime incidents against Muslims in Britain had increased threefold in the last week, as recorded by the charity Tell Mama.

National Far-right riots

'It was a dark time' Photographers fear for their safety as they are targeted in violent attacks

Robyn Vinter
North of England correspondent

Violence from the far right against press photographers is getting worse, with the last few days leaving them fearing for their safety, the National Union of Journalists has said.

The union called for those who are intimidating news gatherers to be prosecuted, after a number of photographers, reporters and camera crew were abused, attacked and had their equipment destroyed or stolen.

Bectu, the union for those who work behind the scenes in broadcasting, also backed the call, condemning "the appalling harassment and abuse" media professionals had faced in riots in the last week, as far-right violence has erupted in parts of the UK.

This was a continuation of a trend, said Natasha Hirst, the chair of the NUJ photographers' council and the president of the NUJ.

"We've seen it increasingly over the last few years that anyone who is obviously a journalist, in terms of being photographer, videographer or TV crew, that they tend to get targeted, especially by far-right protesters," she said.

There needed to be increased public awareness about the role of journalists, she added. "Without us doing the job that we do, we do not have a functioning democracy, we don't have accurate, reliable information that people need."

One seasoned national news photographer had been walking down a quiet side street during the riot in Middlesbrough on Sunday, when a far-right mob turned a



▲ A photographer gets up close to the unrest in Rotherham on Sunday
PHOTOGRAPH: HOLLIE ADAMS/REUTERS

corner behind him. "A guy with a balaclava said: 'Oi camera, give it here.' There were about 150 of them in a confined area of a terraced street," the photographer said.

He managed to slip through the

'There was a terraced street with one door open, and I just ran straight through that doorway'

Press photographer who fled from mob

crowd with people shouting "Get him!" and "Stop him!"

Many broadcasters pulled out of the scene because of the dangers. The same day, the news photographer was forced to flee across a road as a news team was robbed of its video camera, and later he was accosted again by a gang of young men, who saw he had a camera hidden underneath his jacket.

"I pushed past them, ran down the road and there was a terraced street with one door open, and I just ran straight through that doorway, straight into their living room."

With not enough police to contain the situation and no counter-protesters to distract the rioters, unarmed and unprotected photographers and news crews became their target.

"I take myself as a very good read of people and I have the experience to be able to judge whether I should be somewhere or I shouldn't be somewhere. But this was free-ranging, there were no restrictions upon the people who were causing damage, disruption and violence to people," he said.

The photographer, who has spent more than 30 years working in the UK and internationally, including in war zones, said it was "equally scary" as being in the thick of a militarised conflict. "It was a situation like no other in the UK," he said. "This was threatened violence through brute

force and physical contact, which makes [the danger] personally more direct and real."

Returning later to his car, he found it completely smashed and not able to be driven.

"It was a dark time," he said, adding: "If you can't see it you can't photograph it. And there lay the inherent danger. Our job is to produce good, honest and trusted visual journalism. But that does have to be balanced with our own safety in mind."

It is not only the far right who are targeting photographers.

An agency photographer said he was looking through the lens of his camera at a riot in Bolton on Sunday, "then all of a sudden, I feel this punch in my left arm, and then it knocks my hand to the side".

He saw it was an Asian man in a balaclava with a group of about 10 other Asian men, part of a counter protest against the far right.

"Quickly, it looks like he goes for another punch, but misses and says, 'Stop taking fucking photos. We don't need any photos, get the fuck away.'"

Shortly after, part of a brick was thrown at him, which missed.

He said he was going to skip the next riot out of fear he would be recognised but would need to be back out in the field soon. "That's sort of the livelihood I've got. I have to go out to pay the bills," he said.

CREAM
JAM
SCONE
FILM
WINE
SNOOZE

FLY BUSINESS CLASS



BRITISH AIRWAYS
A BRITISH ORIGINAL



Musk calls PM 'two-tier Keir' over police response to unrest

Jessica Elgot
Rowena Mason

Elon Musk has called the prime minister "two-tier Keir" in reference to the conspiracy theory that police are treating white far-right "protesters" more harshly than minority groups.

Downing Street would not engage again with the billionaire owner of X, having previously said his comments about a potential civil war in the UK had "no justification".

Since that criticism, Musk has been repeatedly targeting Keir Starmer on his social media platform.

However, the Guardian understands Labour MPs have been privately warned not to engage in debate on Twitter about the far-right violence and to instead amplify

calls for unity. In a letter to MPs, the chief whip, Alan Campbell, said it was "important that you do not do anything that risks amplifying misinformation on social media and do not get drawn into debates online".

But ministers have engaged robustly to dismiss suggestions of "two-tier" policing, including the justice secretary, Shabana Mahmood, and the courts minister, Heidi Alexander.

Musk has promoted the idea of different approaches to policing based on race that has been spread by Tommy Robinson and the Reform UK leader Nigel Farage amid the far-right riots across towns and cities in England and in Belfast.

In a slew of tweets aimed at Starmer, Musk, who is one of the world's richest men, also questioned whether the riots were taking

place in Britain or the Soviet Union, in response to a video purporting to show someone being arrested for making offensive comments on Facebook.

Musk's provocative interventions come after Downing Street criticised him on Monday for posting that "civil war is inevitable" under a video of violent riots in Liverpool.

Starmer's spokesperson said on Monday the violence came from a small minority of people who "do not speak for Britain" and said the prime minister did not share the sentiments of Musk, who has previously been criticised for allowing far-right figures back on X. "There's no justification for comments like that," the spokesperson said.

Responding to the theory of "two-tier" policing that is circulating on social media, ministers dismissed

claims that groups were being treated differently by police.

Mahmood posted on X yesterday: "It doesn't matter who you are or what you're protesting - if you turn up in a mask, with a weapon, intent on causing disorder, you will face the full force of the law. To those working with police and community organisations with pride and civic duty - you are the best of us."

On Monday, Farage condemned the rioting on the streets, saying "the levels of intimidation and threat to life have no place in a functioning democracy".

But he went on to claim there was a widespread impression of "two-tier policing", which he said was contributing to a "sense of injustice".

In his letter to Labour MPs, the chief whip said MPs should be giving space on their social media to "amplify what is best about your local communities" and said they should be engaging in the community response, including with faith leaders.

Calling it an "immensely difficult time for local communities", Campbell stressed it was the job of MPs to help "restore order and calm".

Analysis
Alex Hern

How Telegram became a conduit for toxic content

With 550 million users, Telegram is the biggest underground app in the world. A hybrid messaging service and social network, the company seems to make controversy a core part of its business.

From its early days as a rebellion against censorship in Russia, to its adoption of cryptocurrency, and moving forward to its role today as an (in effect) unmoderated chatroom accused of providing a platform for organising riots in the UK, the through line has been an ardent, and often reckless, belief in free speech.

Telegram was co-founded by the exiled Russian billionaire brothers Pavel and Nikolai Durov in 2013. Initially, the service was similar to other messaging apps but has diverged to become more of a social network. As well as one-on-one communication, users can join groups of up to 200,000 people, and create broadcast "channels" that others can follow.

As a result, the service is in a grey area between the public and private internet: its contents don't show up on Google but its messages can spread far faster than even on a chat app such as WhatsApp.

In the UK, Telegram gained prominence in far-right circles as one of the last places that the English Defence League (EDL) founder Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, better known as Tommy Robinson, was allowed to post. With bans from most big social networks, his channel was the easiest way for his fanbase to keep up with his missives - at least until Elon Musk rescinded his ban from X.

Over the past week, that community has coalesced around conspiracist channels such as that run by the Unity News Network and the far-right group Patriotic Alternative, as well as single-purpose groups with names such as "Southport Wake Up".

Joe Mulhall, the director of research at Hope Not Hate, said: "We've been spending 24 hours a day for the last week attempting to dig down and find out who is organising these events. And what you find is that someone sets up a Telegram channel saying something like: 'Nottingham rising, we'll be here at 3pm on Saturday'. And no one has any idea who that is."

TikTok Live Police viewing live streams to catch far-right rioters in act

Jim Waterson
Vikram Dodd

Police officers are watching TikTok in an attempt to catch far-right demonstrators livestreaming self-incriminating footage of their illegal behaviour.

TikTok's Live function has become one of the defining outlets for coverage of the disorder, with hundreds of thousands of viewers watching live streams of rioting over the last week in cities such as Stoke-on-Trent, Leeds, Hull and Nottingham. The streams, which can run for hours, are sometimes broadcast by people involved in the disorder.

Many of the TikTok streams show the faces of people apparently committing illegal acts such as looting shops or setting property on fire.

They are often made by people whose usernames are easily linked to their real-world identity.

A police source said: "Every force will have analysts monitoring social media, TikTok, for

evidence-gathering purposes. Regional organised crime units are doing that as well, focusing on the higher end of offending, those who are inciting and the senior organisers."

Many of the defining videos of this summer's disorder have been recorded and broadcast by members of the public either taking part in the disorder or standing in crowds of people rioting.

One riot in Middlesbrough on Sunday was simultaneously livestreamed by at least six different TikTok accounts. The footage showed cars being set on fire, bricks thrown through the windows of homes, and shops being raided.

One of the streams had 14,000 people watching as it livestreamed people looting an Iceland supermarket in the Teesside town.

Another stream from Middlesbrough had 4,000 people watching footage of individuals asking car drivers whether they were white before allowing them to drive down a street.

During previous British riots smartphone take-up was still relatively low and the mobile technology did not easily support livestreaming.

This time the police are benefiting from the public's growing tendency to livestream anything of note, aided by improved technology and mobile network capacity enabling people to broadcast.

TikTok's Live function is a natural home for this coverage, due to its ease of use and the popularity of the app. Livestreams of rioting can gain hundreds of viewers a minute, as the app's algorithm rapidly promotes attention-grabbing streams.

This allows members of the public to rapidly build live audiences comparable with television news channels. One complication for police gathering evidence is that TikTok live streams vanish from public view once a stream is ended by the user. But a copy remains accessible by the original streamer for up to 90 days, meaning they are accessible on TikTok's servers.



▲ A riot in Middlesbrough on Sunday was simultaneously livestreamed on six different TikTok accounts. Some footage showed bricks being thrown through windows of homes and cars being set on fire

PHOTOGRAPHS:
TIKTOK



▲ People use their mobiles to film the unrest in Middlesbrough on Sunday

Calls to ban artificial worktops that 'cause incurable disease'

Nadeem Badshah

A ban on artificial stone worktops should be considered by the government after a rise in cases of an incurable disease linked to their manufacture, experts have warned.

One leading medic has called for "urgent action" to protect workers who cut the building material. Kitchen worktops made from artificial stone are cheaper than natural stone - such as granite or marble - but they contain significantly more silica. Experts have warned that stone-masons who cut this material could

be breathing in high concentrations of silica dust, which could potentially lead to them developing a potentially fatal lung condition called silicosis. The first UK case of the disease linked to the cutting of artificial stone, which is made from crushed rocks bound together with resins and pigments, was identified last year and medics have seen a rise in cases. Experts have documented the first eight cases in the UK in a new paper, all of which were men with an average age of 34. Researchers said that one of the eight patients has since died.

Dr Jo Feary, the lead author of the paper which is published in the journal Thorax, told the PA news agency: "I think there needs to be an urgent focus on this disease." The consultant in occupational lung diseases at the Royal Brompton Hospital added: "What's really striking is it is affecting young people, in their 20s and 30s, and there's no treatment for it. If they didn't do their job, they wouldn't have a disease, and it should be preventable. So we need urgent action." Engineered stone has been banned in Australia since July after a rise in

cases of silicosis. The condition occurs when silica dust is inhaled, causing inflammation in the lungs and leads to hardened tissue. Symptoms include shortness of breath, weakness and tiredness. It has no known cure - though some with the condition have received lung transplants - prompting researchers to say that prevention of the disease in the first place is "critical". A Health and Safety Executive spokesperson said: "We continue to work with industry to raise awareness of managing the risks of exposure."

Can the people who can read this tell
the people who can't to book an eye test

(Thanks)



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◀ The Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act was introduced in 2023 by the Conservatives but has never been used to resolve any dispute or strike

Unions welcome Labour move to scrap 'draconian' Conservative strike law

Aletha Adu
Political correspondent

Unions have welcomed the government's move to formally scrap a "draconian" anti-strike law that would have ensured a minimum level of service during industrial action. The deputy prime minister, Angela Rayner, and the business secretary, Jonathan Reynolds, have written to government departments with sectors that are most affected by strikes to give a "clear message" that the measures will be repealed. The Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act was introduced by the Conservative government last year in response to a wave of strikes prompted by rows over pay, jobs and conditions. However, the powers had never been used by employers or resolved a single dispute. While most senior union figures have praised the repealing of the minimum service law - with one source expressing relief over the fact that a government was not attacking unions - privately some are waiting to see if the government will deliver on a pledge to overhaul workers' rights within its first 100 days in power, which they hope will include a ban on zero-hour contracts and an outright ban on fire and rehire practices. Prof Nicola Ranger, the general secretary of the Royal College of Nursing, noted that "the government must soon go the whole way and remove the remaining anti-union legislation and continue on this mature approach to relations with public sector workers and their representatives". Senior union figures including the TUC general secretary, Paul Nowak,

Matt Wrack, the general secretary of the Fire Brigades Union, Rachel Harrison, the GMB's national secretary, Usdaw's general secretary, Paddy Lillis, and Paul Whiteman of the National Association of Head Teachers were quick to praise the news, which had been promised in Keir Starmer's first king's speech. Unite appeared silent, after criticising the government's workers' rights package in the run-up to the election. Nowak said: "Public services work best when governments listen to and engage constructively with their workforces." He added: "Strikes are resolved around the table - not through legislating away dissent, but the Tories insisted on railroading MSLs [minimum service levels] through parliament in order to score headlines and look tough to backbenchers." Unison's general secretary, Christina McAnea, said: "This was a terrible law. It's great the government is ditching it so early on. This legislation should have never reached the statute book. No one wanted minimum service levels, only a spiteful government watching power drain away and desperate to shore up its rapidly disappearing support." The change forms part of a wider reset of industrial relations in Britain, after the health secretary, Wes Streeting, attempted to end the dispute with junior doctors by offering a wage increase of 22.3% over two years. Junior doctors' leaders in England agreed to the pay deal, which is now being put to their members. Rachel Reeves, the chancellor, also gave public sector workers an above-inflation pay increase after accepting the recommendations of independent pay review bodies last week.

Strictly pick thrills visually impaired dancers

Rachel Hall

Visually impaired ballroom dancers – and their teachers – have told of their delight at the unveiling of the blind comedian Chris McCausland as a contestant on Strictly Come Dancing.

Dr Rashmi Becker, who set up Step Change Studios in 2017 to offer accessible dance classes for disabled people, is hoping blind ballroom dancing will get a similar boost to that enjoyed by British Sign Language (BSL) users after contestant Rose Ayling-Ellis won the series in 2021.

“I’m always asked, how can you dance in a wheelchair or if you’re blind? To be on such a prominent show [as Strictly], it raises awareness of that disability and challenges people’s preconceptions,” she said.

Becker was approached by a Strictly producer back in 2018 for her advice on including disabled performers and is thrilled to “fast forward to see so many different types of disability represented”.

She said: “They’re the people the public often get behind and really root for and [who] become the nation’s favourites.”

Becker’s blind ballroom classes “just took off” after launch and are continuing to grow, she said.

Her classes have an emphasis on non-verbal communication and physical adjustments, including how to use cues in the music and follow its pace. Teachers use precise, descriptive language – for example



▼ Last year’s winner, Ellie Leach and dance partner Vito Coppola on BBC One’s Strictly Come Dancing

PHOTOGRAPH: GUY LEVY/BBC/PA

Strictly stars unveiled

As well as Chris McCausland, the following celebrities have so far been announced for this season.

JB Gill Singer and TV presenter who rose to fame as part of the boyband JLS after they were runners-up on the X Factor in 2008.

Tom Dean Three-time Olympic swimming champion has just competed in the Paris Games.

Wynne Evans The Welsh opera singer is best known as the moustachioed tenor from the Go Compare adverts.

Toyah Willcox Singer who had chart success in the 1980s and appeared in a string of films. She appeared at Glastonbury this summer.

specifying how many degrees the dancer must turn to get the right angle, and using voice or clapping to indicate where they are in a room.

The dancers are usually led by sighted partners, but they are “not pulling people around the room”, Becker said, and as dancers develop many are able to take the lead.

Martia Bevan, 59, from south London, began losing her sight in her early 20s and is now totally blind. She found mainstream classes inaccessible, and concluded that dance was “something I always wanted to do but thought I couldn’t”.

Becker’s classes, she said, “opened up a whole new world”. She is thrilled by Strictly’s new contestant,



◀ Chris McCausland, a comedian who is blind, is the first contestant announced for this year’s Strictly

saying: “It promotes awareness around what people can do, rather than society’s traditional perspective on disability as being limiting and restricting. It’s a real game-changer.”

Kirsty James, 35, a policy officer at the Royal National Institute of Blind People from Caerphilly, starred on the TV show Amy Dowden’s Dare to Dance last year, in which she learned a ballroom dance for the first time since losing her eyesight.

“Not being able to see myself in the mirror any more, that was totally different, but it gave me more freedom because I wasn’t watching myself. It really challenged that perfectionism in me,” she said. James has since joined a mainstream dance class, and secures a spot at the front to get extra help from teachers.

Kinnari Patel, 31, from Kingston finds ballroom dancing’s rhythm and structure can suit the visually impaired. She also works hard on muscle memory. “Every time I make a coffee, I do a little cha-cha move, to get it ingrained in my body,” she said.

Processing of UK export licences for arms to Israel is ‘suspended’

Patrick Wintour
Diplomatic editor

Civil servants appear to have suspended the processing of arms export licences for sales to Israel pending the completion of a government review.

Exporters seeking licences are reportedly being told applications are suspended pending the review.

Whitehall sources insisted this was not a change in policy and might be an administrative procedure.

No date has been set for the completion of the review of the risk of weapons sales to Israel in light of allegations of breaches of humanitarian law in the Gaza conflict. The task has been made more complex due to a desire by ministers to draw a distinction between arms sold for defensive purposes and those sold for offensive purposes for use in Gaza.

The previous government said in June that 108 arms export licences had been granted for Israel between the Hamas attack on 7 October and the end of May. The Jewish Chronicle and Mail on Sunday reported that applicants for arms export licences have received a reply saying “suspended pending policy review”.

A spokesperson for the Department for Business and Trade said: “There has been no change in our approach to export licences to Israel. We continue to review export licence applications on a case by case basis.”

After a freedom of information request, Christian Aid found 20 companies had been issued with standard individual export licences for military goods to Israel between 7 October and 31 May. A further 30 had military export licence applications pending. The department told Christian Aid that granting a licence did not mean that an export had taken place.

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IT glitch hits Scotland's exam results day as pass rates fall

Libby Brooks
Scotland correspondent

The pass rate has fallen while the attainment gap has widened across all Scottish school qualifications after a chaotic start to results day yesterday as thousands of pupils received a blank email instead of their exam results.

The chief executive of the Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), Fiona Robertson, apologised to the estimated 7,000 young people affected, blaming a technical issue that was “resolved swiftly”, with the correct results emails sent out by 9.30am.

Some young people reported receiving confirmation of their university or college place while still not knowing their actual results.

Of the 145,000 pupils who sat



Students at Smithycroft secondary in Glasgow celebrate their results. Scotland overall showed a widening attainment gap
PHOTOGRAPH: WATTIE CHEUNG

exams in Scotland, the numbers of those achieving an A, B or C grade at National 5, Higher and Advanced Higher fell across the board.

With this year marking the return of full coursework assessment following disruption during the Covid crisis, after a “sensitive” approach last year, the biggest drop in A-C grades was among Advanced Highers, falling from 79.8% in 2023 to 75.3%, compared with 79.4% in 2019.

The Higher A-C attainment fell from 77.1% in 2023 to 74.9% this year, compared with 74.8% pre-pandemic. For National 5 exams the rate also dropped from 78.8% in 2023 to 77.2%, compared with 78.2% in 2019.

The SQA noted there had been different approaches to marking in each year since 2019 and that “comparisons of attainment between years should be treated with significant caution and do not allow

for meaningful conclusions to be drawn”.

The results also show that the gap between the exam results of those from the richest and poorest parts of Scotland had grown compared with last year and before the pandemic.

The most recent figures show that the gap between Higher A-C pass rates for pupils from the most affluent and most deprived areas of the country stood at 17.2%, up from

16% last year and 16.9% in 2019. The attainment gap has also increased for National 5s and Advanced Highers.

Scottish Labour’s education spokesperson, Pam Duncan-Glancy, said: “The poverty-related attainment gap is at its highest-ever level, while attainment has also fallen. Despite the best efforts of teachers, staff and young people, they are being forced to pay the price of 17 years of SNP failure and SQA chaos.”

The Scottish Conservative shadow cabinet secretary for education, Liam Kerr – a party leadership contender – said the “chaotic and shambolic situation” with blank emails would only have added to pupil stress. “Successive SNP education secretaries have dithered and delayed on reforming the SQA for too long. Even then their plans amount to a sticking plaster rather than the widespread changes that Scottish education requires.”

Andrea Bradley, general secretary of the EIS education union, congratulated all those receiving results, stressing: “We cannot forget that this cohort of candidates experienced significant disruption to their education not so long ago.”

The results have been awarded “in the midst of the worst cost of living crisis in living memory”, Bradley said, when “education, and students and their families, are still struggling to recover from the long-term damaging impacts of the global pandemic”.

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National Edinburgh festival



I do like to have lots of little things happening. I never want to give up any of them. I enjoy it all'

Olaf Falafel
Comedian

◀ *Olaf Falafel, who cooked up his name in a workshop at the Tringe festival in Hertfordshire 13 years ago*

PHOTOGRAPH:
ALAN POWDRILL

That's where the then art director in advertising turned his hand to standup, 13 years ago. "Write down the funniest name you can come up with," went the brief, "then make the rest of the class laugh by saying it." And so was born the stage alter ego of a comic who claims, not very convincingly, that his real name is Derek Chickpeas. "If the compere says 'And your next act is Olaf Falafel'," he says, "you're not going to expect sharp political satire, are you? My name is a shortcut to 'this isn't going to be sensible'."

Falafel's particular brand of nonsense begins, but does not end, with all those daft one-liners. (Today's example: "I started off with a fetish for head-to-toe Lycra. Then I bought myself a bobsleigh. Where does it go next? It's a slippery slope.") But he's about antics ("titting around", he calls it) more than wordplay.

A devoted Luton Town fan, he has just decorated a giant ornamental hare in the club's most iconic kits for an art trail through the town. Falafel is also a children's author with a string of books to his name, including two adventures for Trixie Pickle: Art Avenger.

This year as ever, he's performing a kids show (Olaf's Stupidest Super Stupid Show So Far) and one for grownups (Has Anyone Actually Ever Woven a Sigourney?), differentiated by little more than the occasional swearword. (For clarity: in the latter.) Both are on the free fringe, which Falafel prefers, "not out of principle, but because it fits the DIY aesthetic".

It's quite the niche he's carved out, and he couldn't be cosier in it. With no obligations to the comedy club circuit, he keeps his arm in performing not in theatres, but in schools. "I get lots of emails from teachers and parents," he says, "saying that their child doesn't like reading or isn't academic. But because I'd visited they were buzzing."

As an art educator, YouTuber, comedian and author, "I do like to have lots of little things happening here, there and everywhere", he beams. "I never want to give up any of them. I enjoy it all, and I hope that comes across."

Has Anyone Ever Actually Woven a Sigourney? is at Laughing Horse @ The Pear Tree until 25 August. Stupidest Super Stupid Show So Far is at Laughing Horse @ The Counting House until 25 August

'This isn't going to be sensible' The fringe king of the one-liners

Brian Logan

They say that, for comedians, the Edinburgh fringe is a ruthless trade fair, where sharp-elbowed acts bankrupt themselves in pursuit of the right demographics and a slot on Live at the Apollo. Well, there is that.

But there are also comedians such as Olaf Falafel, ploughing his eccentric furrow on the free fringe to kids, adults and everyone in between. Some comedians would kill their granny for an Edinburgh comedy award. Falafel would make yours laugh for a tilt at that

prestige-free gong, Dave's Funniest Joke of the Fringe.

Seldom has its shortlist been complete in recent years without a trademark dotty one-liner by the towering Luton man - who won in 2019 for an ill-starred quip punning on the word "Tourettes". "I keep randomly shouting out 'broccoli' and 'cauliflower' - I think I might have florets." (Day one: joy and acclaim. Day two: outrage from Tourette syndrome charities.)

"Every year when the list is announced," he tells me, "you get people on Twitter saying 'this is rubbish, these are terrible, heard 'em all before'. But no one who's on those lists cares. Everyone knows they're out of context, that they're not necessarily the funniest joke."

Dotty lines Five jokes from comedian

- 'I took out a loan to pay for an exorcism. If I don't pay it back, I'm going to get repossessed.'
- 'My dad used to say to me "Pints, gallons, litres" which I think speaks volumes.'
- 'It all starts innocently, mixing chocolate and Rice Krispies. But before you know it, you're adding raisins and marshmallows - it's a rocky road.'
- 'If you're being chased by a pack of taxidermists, do not play dead.'
- 'I spent the morning building a time machine - that's four hours of my life I'm definitely getting back.'

Let's be fair, Falafel's one-liners are usually pretty funny - see last year's gag: "Getting mythology wrong is my Hercules ankle." Or 2017's nominee for the Dave award: "I wasn't particularly close to my dad before he died - which was lucky, because he trod on a landmine." Boom boom!

"If you talk to the kind of comedians who [get nominated] they'll say 'of course we're proud to be there'," he says. "I was born next door to a butchers in Luton. My friends don't know anything about the fringe and who's won the proper award. But they will pick up a copy of whatever paper they're reading, and when I'm on those lists, they'll notice. It has a reach beyond Edinburgh. I would never, ever say I don't like being on there. Because it's great fun."

Fun is a precious quality to the 47-year-old, as a chat over coffee soon establishes. Would you be surprised to learn Olaf Falafel is not his real name? He cooked it up in a workshop as part of the Tringe festival in Tring, Hertfordshire.

Theatre review Chilling vision of community gripped by fear

Nation
Summerhall
★★★★☆

Mark Fisher

It is not the kind of topicality Sam Ward would have wished for, but the far-right riots in England and Northern Ireland give his storytelling show a chilling pertinence. Staged by his own YESYESNONO company, Nation asks us to imagine an ordinary town - not too big, not too small - where everyone knows each other and nothing unexpected happens. Except when it does and a bloodied body is found in the town centre. Community cohesion cracks.

The liberal-minded people who thought they shared the same values as their neighbours discover how quickly fear can flourish into hate. Under threat, their fellow citizens victimise the outsider.

By implication, those liberal-minded people are us. "Right now, you are being an audience," Ward repeatedly tells us, inviting us to have a good look at each other as we enjoy our shared experience. Our imaginations do the heavy lifting, with only the subtle shifts of David Doyle's lighting and the gentle additions of Carmel Smickersgill's sound design for embellishment.

The show seems to suggest that if we can imagine this town as

it suffers supernatural changes, then, for better or worse, we could imagine something else entirely. The story in my head may not be the same as the one in yours, as a twist in the show reveals.



▲ Sam Ward's performance in his one-man show is mesmerising

With his simple sentences, repeated phrases and direct audience address, Ward has much in common with the writer-performer Tim Crouch. He, too, paints vivid pictures and compels us to know what happens next. It is a mesmerising performance.

But the story itself, a Dogville-style tale of nice people turning nasty, delivers less than it promises. Ward's measured tones suggest he harbours a great insight, but he seems only to highlight the injustice of attacking the most vulnerable - and you do not need to read the news to know that.

Until 26 August

Harris selects 'impressive' Walz as presidential running mate

Continued from page 1

survivor benefits to live. He used the GI bill to attend college. He coached high school football and advised the high school's gay-straight alliance.

His background is "impressive in its own right", but also informs his governing, she said.

Minnesota Democrats' legislative record played into her choice – she noted a law that constitutionally protects access to abortion and one requiring universal background checks for gun purchases.

"But what impressed me most about Tim is his deep commitment to his family," she added. "We are going to build a great partnership. We are going to build a great team. We are going to win this election."

Walz posted a short statement to X yesterday. "Vice President Harris is showing us the politics of what's possible. It reminds me a bit of the first day of school," he said.

His midwesterner dad charm and straight talk propelled him up the list as a potential vice-presidential pick.

It was his simple retort against Trump and his allies that caught national Democrats' attention most: he called them weird. His clips on TV shows went viral, showing him pushing back on Republicans' "weird behaviour" while showcasing a list of what he had accomplished as a Democratic governor and how Democrats would govern if they win the White House again.

Walz explained in a TV interview why he had started calling Trump weird. It is true that Trump's policy would put women's lives on the line and that he's a threat to constitutional values, he said. But he's also on the campaign trail "talking about Hannibal Lecter and shocking sharks and just whatever crazy thing pops into his mind", he added.

"Have you ever seen the guy laugh?" Walz said of Trump. "That seems very weird to me, that an adult can go through six and a half years of being in the public eye. If he has laughed, it's at someone, not with someone. That is weird behaviour."

Walz grew up in small-town Nebraska, giving him rural bona fides



▲ Minnesota's governor, Tim Walz, who called Donald Trump 'weird'

that will help voters who have moved away from Democrats in recent years.

"The golden rule that makes small towns work so we're not at each other's throats all the time in a little town is: mind your own damn business," Walz said in one TV spot.

His former colleagues praised his ability to connect with those crucial voters in the Rust belt, and to not only explain what's bad about Republicans, but what Democrats would actually do in office.

Some political commentators had suggested that, as the first woman of colour nominated by a major party, Harris was mostly likely to pick a white man to balance the ticket.

She is looking to build on a successful campaign launch after stepping in to replace Joe Biden, who dropped out of the race after a disastrous debate performance against Trump.

Harris and Walz can expect a rapturous welcome at the Democratic national convention in Chicago starting on 19 August. She has been endorsed by the former presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton.

A New York Times/Siena College national opinion poll published on 25 July found that Harris has narrowed what had been a sizeable Trump lead. Trump was ahead of Harris 48% to 46% among registered voters, compared with a lead of 49% to 41% over Biden in early July.

Republicans immediately began attacking Walz as a "radical leftist" and claimed that picking Walz was "a massive gift to Republicans", suggesting his presence on the ticket will tank the Harris campaign.

In a statement, the Trump campaign called Walz a "west coast wannabe" who has "spent his governorship trying to reshape Minnesota in the image of the Golden state".

The campaign brought up a clip from 2017 where Walz talks about electoral maps that show broad swaths of red, saying those areas are "mostly cows and rocks".

The Trump campaign said: "If Walz won't tell voters the truth, we will: just like Kamala Harris, Tim Walz is a dangerously liberal extremist, and the Harris-Walz California dream is every American's nightmare."

Speaking in Philadelphia yesterday, Vance said he had called Walz to congratulate him on his selection and would debate him, but only after the Democratic convention.

"So that's the first reason," for not commenting too much about Walz, Vance said – though he subsequently attacked Walz, saying: "The second reason is that Tim Walz's record is a joke. He's one of the most far-left radicals in the entire United States government, at any level."



'A down-home guy' The gun-owning, straight-talking midwestern teacher

Rachel Leingang
Minneapolis

Minnesota's governor captured the internet's attention and swayed Democrats' messaging by succinctly summing up how he views Republicans: they're weird.

Clips of Tim Walz have spread widely, helping cement him as Kamala Harris's pick to run alongside her as vice-president.

It's not just the "weird" of it all: he's been able to run through a list of what Democrats want, and what he's done as governor for his state, that articulates to voters what they would be voting for, not just the danger of what they're voting against. He speaks plainly and pragmatically, highlighting commonsense policies.

Walz, 60, was born and raised in small-town Nebraska. He became a teacher, first in China, then in Nebraska and finally in Mankato, Minnesota, where he taught

geography and coached the high school American football team. He was the faculty adviser for the school's first gay-straight alliance network in 1999, long before Democrats nationally stood for gay rights. He also served in the army national guard for 24 years, enlisting at 17, a role that took him around the US and Europe. And like JD Vance, Walz has a penchant for Diet Mountain Dew.

"Frankly, a lot of politicians are just not normal people," said David Hogg, a gun control advocate and a Walz fan. "They just don't know how to talk to normal people."

Walz comes across as what he is: a straight-talking teacher and youth football coach.

He first ran for office in 2006 in a Republican-leaning congressional district, knocking off the incumbent in an upset. He kept the district until 2016, repeatedly dispatching Republicans. In 2018, he ran for governor and won, then defended the seat in 2022.

He's now the chair of the Democratic Governors Association, a position that has given him a national profile in the past year as

he has stumped first for Joe Biden and now Harris. His appearances in recent weeks have taken off, putting his name on the shortlist for vice-president and his tone centre stage for Democrats.

In Minnesota, Democrats secured a narrow government trifecta in 2022, taking both chambers of the legislature and the governorship, and Walz and his colleagues in the legislature got to work, delivering a list of progressive policy victories such as free school meals, abortion protections, gun restrictions and legal marijuana.

If Democrats want to see what their party governing would look like, Minnesota is the example. But maybe the policies would be too liberal for the national stage, one TV interviewer posed to Walz.

"What a monster! Kids are eating and having full bellies so they can go learn and women are making their own healthcare decisions," Walz said jokingly.

Hogg pointed to a speech Walz gave when Donald Trump came to Minnesota last week, in which Walz was dressed down – like a



midwestern dad – in a camo hat and a T-shirt, as an example of how he's down-to-earth. The outfit caught attention online for not looking like a politician's attempt to look like a regular person, but just like Walz's regular clothes. "He might run for vice-president or he might clean the garage. It's the weekend, anything can happen," one tweet quipped.

"Tim's just a freaking down-home guy," said Tim Ryan, a former Democratic US representative from Ohio who worked with Walz in Congress and worked out alongside him in the House gym.

Ryan called to mind a recent clip in which Walz mentioned that Minnesota ranked in the top three for happiest states in the nation. "Isn't that really the goal here? For some joy? When he mentioned that I was like, dang man, that's really good. That's really good, because it gets us out of the political space and into the human being space."

It's part of a shift Democrats have been feeling since Biden announced he wouldn't seek re-election. There's less focus on the dire consequences of electing Trump again – though those consequences are certainly still part of the motivation – and more on detailing what Democrats want to do if they win.

"Fear and anger is such a low vibration," Ryan said. "It's just a negative vibration. And I think what Tim talked about, like the

'Tim Walz is the most authentic kind of normal person you're going to meet'

Heidi Heitkamp
Former senator

▲ *Tim Walz made his first appearance as Kamala Harris's running mate at a rally in Philadelphia last night*

PHOTOGRAPH:
ANDREW HARNIK/
GETTY IMAGES

hope of things to come, and the hope of what we've actually accomplished, and we can do more. That's optimistic, that's a high vibration."

Ryan is on text chains with former members who served with Walz and are excited to see him in the spotlight.

Heidi Heitkamp, a former senator of North Dakota, said Walz's plain-speaking attitude works because it's real, before saying about Trump's pick for vice-president: "There's an inauthenticity about JD Vance that is the antithesis of what Tim Walz is. Tim is the most authentically kind of normal person you're going to meet, and he has a background that is uniquely situated in these times, especially for people in my part of the country."

Heitkamp and Walz got to know each other flying back and forth between Washington DC and the upper midwest. She felt an instant recognition of the kind of person he was that she thinks translates throughout the midwest. "I met Tim Walz and I knew Tim Walz," she said. "I didn't have to say, what's this guy all about and what's his agenda? I knew his agenda, because I had high school teachers just like him, who cared about their students and cared about their community."

Progressives in Minnesota, who have at times clashed with Walz on policy, were still rooting for him, too. Elianne Farhat, the executive director of TakeAction MN, said she and her organisation had disagreed deeply with Walz over the years, but that he was a person who will move and change his position based on feedback. He evolves.

She and others pointed to his position on guns. Walz is a gun owner and a hunter who previously received endorsements and donations from the National Rifle Association (NRA) and had an A rating from the group. But he shifted: he gave donations from the group to charity after the mass shooting in Las Vegas in 2017, and he supported an assault weapons ban after the 2018 school shooting in Parkland, Florida. While governor, he has signed bills into law that restrict guns. He now has an F rating from the NRA.

"We're not electing our saviours. We're not electing perfect people. We're electing people who we can make hard decisions with, we can negotiate with, and who are serious about getting things done for people. And Governor Walz has shown that pretty strongly the last couple years as governor of Minnesota," Farhat said.

The biggest drawback for Walz – and a perk for other contenders on Harris' shortlist, such as the Pennsylvania governor, Josh Shapiro – was his geography. Minnesota is not a swing state, though Trump has said he thinks he can win it. Biden being replaced on the top of the ticket probably takes the state out of contention, though.

Republicans will also surely bring up the 2020 protests after George Floyd's murder by a police officer in Minnesota, tying Walz, who was governor at the time, to the aftermath.

Still, his past as a teacher and a veteran from a congressional



▲ As governor of Minnesota, Walz introduced free school meals

district that typically voted Republican strengthens his case. "If you want the blue wall, Tim Walz is the blue wall," Hogg said.

And Walz can win. His electoral record shows his ability to bring in coalitions of voters, from progressives to moderate Republicans, said Michael Brodkorb, the former deputy chair of the Minnesota Republican party. He also knows how to get results after winning.

"It is a part of his political DNA to be able to soften up his critics, win over people and win in Republican areas," Brodkorb said.

Even if Harris hadn't picked Walz, his messaging shift would have continued – "weird" is sticking around. The Harris campaign has used it. "It's really gotten under the Republicans' skin, which is, I think, a sign as to how effective it is," Brodkorb said.

Even Trump responded to the charge. "Nobody's ever called me weird. I'm a lot of things, but weird I'm not."

Heitkamp added: "No one called Trump weird until Tim Walz did. And it resonated for a reason, because he is weird. I mean, anyone who talks about Hannibal Lecter, that's not normal behaviour. I think that there's been people who have tried to intellectualise Donald Trump, and Tim just cut through it all and said, 'This guy's not normal. This is weird.'"

While Trump surrogates often spend their time "doing cleanup on aisle five", Walz can be out talking to voters about what he's accomplished in Minnesota and what Democrats envision for the country, Heitkamp said. It is a message that resonates with the base, but also swing voters who struggle with childcare costs and tuition, two of the issues Walz has tackled in his state.

"Being anti-Trump can't be what the Democratic message is," she said. "The Democratic message has to be about how we will govern differently from Republicans."



▲ Walz, with Hillary Clinton in 2007, is known as a straight talker

Analysis Chris Stein



Little-known governor brings charisma and upbeat persona that will infuriate Trump

As Democrats weathered the upheaval caused by Joe Biden's decision to end his re-election campaign and hand the reigns to his vice-president, Kamala Harris, a party stalwart had a suggestion: start calling Donald Trump "weird".

The pioneer of the attack, which was also deployed by Harris's campaign, was the Minnesota governor, Tim Walz, who insisted to CNN that "it's not a name calling or tagging him with it, it's an observation".

"And I didn't come up with it," he added, noting that he had heard "relatives and Republicans" use the adjective to describe the former president.

Now on his second term as governor, the former congressman and high school teacher will bring a record of progressive policymaking, a somewhat sympathetic view towards pro-Palestine protesters and a distinctly Minnesota style of communication that the campaign could deploy in its efforts to win the swing states of Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania.

"If Donald Trump and JD Vance are irritated that Kamala Harris smiles and laughs, they're really going to be irritated by Tim Walz," Melissa Hortman, the Democratic speaker of Minnesota's house of representatives, told the Guardian. "He is a cheerful person, he's a positive, upbeat person, he's charismatic. He can get a crowd going."

Walz emerged as Harris's pick after a search lasting about two weeks in which the vice-president also considered a group that included the Pennsylvania governor, Josh Shapiro, and the Arizona senator Mark Kelly. The choice of Walz drew praise from across the Democratic party's ideological spectrum.

The congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez said Harris had made an "excellent decision", while Joe Manchin, the West Virginia senator who has left the party and is best known for hampering Biden's efforts to fight child poverty and combat climate change, said: "I can think of no one better than Governor Walz to help bring our country closer together and bring balance back to the Democratic party."

Republicans responded to Walz's selection by posting on social media images of the rioting that rocked Minneapolis four years ago after George Floyd's murder, and reminders of the governor's support for a law allowing undocumented migrants to obtain drivers licences, and of a massive Covid relief scandal that took place during his administration.

Walz's main competitor for the spot of running mate was Shapiro, who, if chosen, may have reignited tensions among Democrats over Israel. Some pro-Palestine activists have signalled a willingness to give Harris a chance to win back their votes, but were wary of Shapiro, who is Jewish and had strongly condemned alleged antisemitism during protests on college campuses against Israel. Walz has a record of support for Israel as well, but after tens of thousands of Minnesotans voted "uncommitted" in the Democratic primary as a protest over the Biden administration's policies towards Gaza, his response was surprisingly warm, calling them "civically engaged".

The choice of running mate was the last major piece of unfinished business for Harris, who quickly consolidated the support necessary after Biden withdrew last month.

However, Christopher J Devine, a political science professor at the University of Dayton and the author of *Do Running Mates Matter?*, said that the decision was unlikely to prove decisive in beating Trump and Vance – or losing to them..

Unfinished Hurston novel on King Herod due out in 2025

Isabelle Rodney

A final novel by the late American writer and anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston will be published next year.

The author of *Their Eyes Were Watching God* was working on a

sequel to her 1939 novel *Moses, Man of the Mountain* when she died in 1960. That sequel, *The Life of Herod the Great*, will be released in January 2025.

The manuscript had been in Hurston's archives at the University of Kansas, accessible only to scholars. It is unfinished and will be published



▲ Zora Neale Hurston was working on the novel when she died in 1960

in that state, alongside commentary from the academic and literary critic Deborah Plant.

The historical novel tells the story of Herod the Great, a Judean king of the first century BC. According to the Bible, Herod was responsible for the "massacre of the innocents", ordering the execution of all male children two years old or younger around Bethlehem. Most Herod biographers do not believe this event occurred.

Hurston paints the ruler "in a light very different from his villainous portrayal in the New Testament",

according to the book's UK publisher, HQ, an imprint of HarperCollins. "In Hurston's retelling, Herod is a forerunner of Christ, a religious and philosophical man who enriched Jewish culture and lived a life of valour and vision."

HQ's editorial director, Clare Gordon, said: "Although it was written in the 1950s, its message still resonates with the world of today. As Zora herself writes in her foreword: 'It is history, and history alone, which will mature our judgment and prepare us to take right views.'"

New Welsh leader says priority is services, not devolution

Jessica Elgot

Public services are the priority for Welsh people, rather than more devolution, the new first minister has said, promising to "reinvent" Labour after taking office in the Senedd.

Eluned Morgan, the former health minister, was sworn in yesterday, becoming the third leader of Welsh Labour this year. She has taken over from Vaughan Gething, her predecessor who was in office less than 140 days before being forced to resign over a row about donations and a sacked minister whom he wrongly accused of leaking messages.

Morgan, who is the first female Welsh leader and the only candidate to replace Gething, said she was acutely aware that she had not been through a leadership campaign, and that she needed to set out her stall to the nation and understand how the government could "reset".

"We've got to refresh in office," she said. "And I think having a new female first minister means that things will look different, they'll sound different and they will be different, and that gives us an opportunity to take that refresh seriously. I do think we have to reinvent ourselves in office and take the opportunity to really focus in on things that matter to people."

Morgan said she would do a tour over the summer to get to understand the key priorities for people in Wales. "My guess is that they will want public services to be their priorities,

rather than, at this particular point, pressing for further devolution, although that is something that I know is important for many people in Wales and has indeed been important to me," she said.

Labour has promised to look again at devolving further powers to Wales but has stopped short of any big promises on policing, justice powers or the rail network, three highlighted areas. A report on devolution by the former prime minister Gordon Brown in 2022 suggested shifting powers over youth justice and probation, but not handing over powers for policing, prisons and adult courts.

Morgan said: "I'm not expecting policing to happen overnight in terms of devolution. But I think probably we could make some inroads in relation to youth justice and probation, that would be a significant step forward."

No violent disorder has taken place in Wales connected to the gatherings of far-right individuals in towns across England and in Northern Ireland. Morgan said she was "not complacent" about this and that one of her first meetings as first minister would be to convene police chiefs and community leaders to address strategies for preventing similar violence. "We're ... working hard to prevent any potential disorder in Wales".

A campaign will start on Monday called Hate Hurts Wales. Morgan said: "I think that's going to be instrumental in terms of tackling hate crime, doing that monitoring of community tensions and responding if those emerging tensions break out. We are very aware ... that what we need is a situation where everybody feels valued and feels they can make a contribution to our communities."

In her speech in the Senedd she said the last few weeks had been difficult. "We have been through some turmoil. But we know that we are at our best when we work in unity as a party and as a nation."

Plaid Cymru's leader, Rhun ap Iorwerth, said his party would "wish her well today" but there was a question over her legitimacy since there had been no election. "We remind her and her government that in similar circumstances elsewhere the Labour hierarchy argued that multiple changes in leadership in Westminster and in Scotland undermined the democratic legitimacy of government and demanded fresh elections. It's for Labour to explain why different rules should apply in Wales."

Keir Starmer welcomed her confirmation as first minister, saying she had made history as the first woman to hold the office. "In this new chapter we'll deliver growth in all parts of our nations and deliver the high-quality public services people deserve."



▲ Eluned Morgan, new first minister for Wales, wants a Labour 'reset'



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National
Child poverty

Scrapping two-child benefit cap 'would save hundreds of lives'

Andrew Gregory
Health editor

Curbing child poverty by scrapping the two-child benefit cap would save hundreds of children's lives a year and avoid thousands of admissions to hospital, the largest study of its kind suggests.

Keir Starmer has faced repeated demands from within Labour ranks and from opposition leaders to abolish the policy, which was announced in 2015 by George Osborne, then chancellor. Almost half of children in some towns and cities now live below the breadline.

Researchers from the Universities

of Glasgow, Liverpool and Newcastle have shown for the first time the extraordinary impact that reducing child poverty with measures such as ditching the two-child benefit cap could have.

Tackling it would substantially cut the number of infant deaths and children in care, as well as rates of childhood nutritional anaemia and emergency admissions, with the most deprived regions, especially in the north-east of England, likely to benefit the most, the projections indicate.

It would probably have huge beneficial knock-on effects on local authorities and the NHS, the research concluded. The findings were

published in the Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health.

The two-child limit came into effect in 2017, and restricts child tax credit and universal credit to the first two children in most households.

Using local authority-level data, researchers modelled the effect different reductions in child poverty might have over the next decade.

They said their scenarios of a 15%, 25% and 35% reduction in poverty were considered "to be realistic in light of the 26% fall in prevalence previously observed in the UK between 1997 and 2010" under previous Labour governments.

All reduction scenarios would result in "substantial improvements

to child health" between now and 2033, they said.

An "ambitious but realistic reduction" of 35% on 2023 levels "would be expected to result in avoiding a total of 293 infant deaths, 4,696 children entering care, 458 childhood admissions with nutritional anaemias and 32,650 childhood emergency admissions", the researchers said.

They added: "These reductions would likely translate into significant savings for, and relieve pressure on, local authorities (in relation to children looked after) and health services.

"Benefits are likely to be greatest in the most disadvantaged areas, helping efforts to 'level up'."

The researchers concluded: "If policymakers were to set and achieve

child poverty targets for England – for example, through suggested measures such as removing the two-child limit and benefit cap – this would likely improve child health, particularly among the most socioeconomically disadvantaged and 'level up' regional inequalities".

The latest official UK figures showed an estimated 4.33 million children in households in relative low income after housing costs in the year to March 2023 – a record high.

The new research estimated that northern parts of England "exhibited the greatest relative and absolute benefit" from child poverty reductions.

A government spokesperson said: "No child should be in poverty – that's why our new cross-government taskforce will develop an ambitious child poverty strategy to tackle the crisis.

"Alongside this urgent work, we will roll out free breakfast clubs in all primary schools while delivering on our plan to grow the economy and make work pay for hardworking families in every part of the country."

32,650

Drop in childhood A&E admissions resulting from a 35% reduction in poverty, according to researchers



▲ Aid at a centre in the city helped by Fans Supporting Foodbanks

Food banks Surviving on the poverty frontline in Liverpool

Hannah Al-Othman

At a baby bank in Liverpool, Louise cradles her infant in her arms while volunteers pull donations from the shelves and fill a bag with nappies, formula milk, vests and baby-grows.

The 38-year-old is a mother of five, her children aged five months to 13 years; two are visually impaired and one also has epilepsy, another of her children is deaf.

Louise is a full-time single parent – and she cannot make ends meet. When her electricity recently ran out, she had to ask three people before she could find someone able to lend her the money to keep the lights on. "It's so hard now, they've cut the benefits, with the cap, it's just trying to get through, passing clothes



▲ Volunteers prepare bags of aid at Micah Liverpool food bank in St Vincent de Paul church PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTOPHER THOMOND/THE GUARDIAN

down, charity shops, I've never bought anything new," she said. She is breastfeeding, but medical professionals were concerned her baby was losing weight, so she had to start supplementary feeding – an additional cost. "Fruit and veg is the worst, trying to keep them nourished," she said. "I went to look in Tesco to get the SMA [formula] and I had to leave it because it was so dear; it's choosing whether to get fruit for the other kids, or milk."

She goes without herself "all the time" and worries a lot, "especially for the future, with eve. She has been referred for help from Babykind, which runs out of the Kindfulness Coffee Club in Bootle, and is sitting with Sarah Davidson, a mental health first aider, who works here.

The families who come through their doors are "doing their best", Davidson said, "but you can only budget with what you've got, and it's so hard. If [the two-child benefit

cap] was scrapped, it would give families breathing space," she said.

While Davidson is signposting Louise to other organisations that may be able to help her, another mum of three comes in with her child in a pram, desperate for supplies and support. "This is what it's like every day," Davidson said.

The issue played out in parliament last month, when Keir Starmer suspended the whip from seven MPs who had voted in favour of a proposed SNP amendment to the king's speech – which sets out the legislative agenda – that would have lifted the cap.

The current policy, introduced in 2017 by the Conservative government, prohibits almost all parents from claiming child tax credit or universal credit for more than two children. It has been cited repeatedly as a factor in rising levels of child poverty. Among the rebels was Ian Byrne, the MP for Liverpool West Derby. He and other suspended MPs will sit as

independents. Kim Johnson, the Labour MP for Liverpool Riverside, had tabled her own amendment calling for the two-child limit to be scrapped, but it was not selected by the speaker.

She abstained on the SNP amendment, which was defeated by 363 votes to 103. She said she decided not to vote against the government "for unity", but added: "The massive strength of feeling is undeniable. It must be a priority for our first budget."

It is clearly an issue where Labour MPs are trying to grapple with how to do best for their constituents. The issue is an early test of Starmer's leadership.

"I had to put West Derby before party," Byrne said, telling the Liverpool Echo that 43% of children in the constituency lived in poverty, "and so many are affected by the two-child limit".

Byrne was one of three founders of Fans Supporting Foodbanks, a joint initiative between supporters of Liverpool and Everton football clubs. It began in 2015, with collecting food in wheelie bins outside pubs on match days, and has grown to feed 2,500 people a week across Merseyside.

This week, his two co-founders, Dave Kelly and Robert Daniels, were at one of their mobile market-style food pantries, near Everton's Goodison Park stadium.

People who live within designated postcodes can sign up, then come here and select a basket of items for £3.50, including fresh meat, fruit, and vegetables.

Kanku Kuyateh, 38, works as a carer, but she struggles to feed her four children. "It's extremely difficult," she said. Marina Repey, 32, has two daughters. "It's very difficult to pay the rent," she said.

As the cost of living has increased, demand for their food pantries has soared, Daniels said.

The two-child benefit cap, he said, put "millions of children in poverty overnight".

In his view, "it should be scrapped" – and on the poverty frontlines in Liverpool, it's hard to find a dissenting voice.

'I had to put West Derby before party ... so many children are affected by the two-child limit'

Ian Byrne
MP for Liverpool West Derby





◀ Oriane Bertone of France competes in the women's sport climbing boulder semi-final at Le Bourget, finishing second behind Janja Garnbret of Slovenia

PHOTOGRAPH: FABRICE COFFRINI/AFP/GETTY



◀ Ramzy al-Duhami and his horse, Untouchable 32, compete for Saudi Arabia in the individual show jumping final at the Chateau de Versailles

PHOTOGRAPH: ALEX BROADWAY/GETTY



Kerr has to settle for silver as Hocker gatecrashes the 1500m battle 'for the ages'

Daniel Boffey
Stade de France

Britain's Josh Kerr lost out on gold in the run-in of the men's 1500m final last night after an Olympic record-breaking run by the American Cole Hocker delivered the shock of the Games.

It had been billed as a grudge match, a "race for the ages" as Sebastian Coe described it, that would see Kerr, the world champion from Edinburgh, and Norway's Jakob Ingebrigtsen, the Olympic title holder, compete for the top podium and bragging rights in Paris.

Ingebrigtsen set an electrifying pace from the outset in the Stade de France, and as Kerr, wearing his signature sunglasses, put on the afterburners half way through the final lap, the stage looked set for the two rivals to go toe-to-toe for glory.

Kerr, 26, looked to have the better of the 23-year-old Norwegian with whom he had exchanged barbs for months, but with just 30 metres to go, Hocker, a silver medalist in the world indoor championships, spoiled the party, edging it in the final yards as the British middle distance runner, clocking a new personal best, tired.

Hocker, 23, took the race in an Olympic record of 3.27.65, after pulling from fifth to first over the last 300 metres to beat his personal best by more than three seconds, and Kerr by 0.14 seconds.

Yared Nuguse of the US, who had come from 10th, almost edged silver off Kerr at the finishing line, but took bronze with Ingebrigtsen left in fourth. It was not "one of the most vicious" 1500m races of modern times, as Kerr had said by way of a preview, but it was exhilarating nonetheless and proved to be the first US win in the metric mile since Matt Centrowitz took gold in 2016.

Kerr, who won bronze in Tokyo, said: "I can't walk away from the championship disappointed. Obviously I said what my goals were, it was pretty obvious. But I've put a performance out there today that I was extremely proud of.

"I focused on my controllables, I ran the fastest and best 1500 metres

I've ever done in my life and so when you start worrying about what everyone else does from the results then you'll never be satisfied. It's obviously not the colour of medal I want but it's working towards the right colour - from bronze to silver."

Ingebrigtsen, the fastest man on the field - and fourth-fastest of all time - admitted that he had gone too quickly and too early.

He said: "My plan was to win. It didn't go according to plan. But I felt very strong the first couple of laps.

"I had difficulty telling the pace because it was quite fast. But it was difficult to slow down and reduce myself a little bit. I saw I was starting to get a little bit of a gap and I kept on pushing but it was just 100 metres too long today.

"The guys behind me finishing in front of me did a great race. It's not always easy to spend your energy wisely but I felt strong. You can't really tell 100% when you're hitting the wall before you hit it - it came just a little bit too early today."

Shortly afterwards, British sprinter Dina Asher Smith was left disappointed after losing out on a bronze medal following a photo finish with the US's Brittany Brown in the women's 200m final. Gabrielle Thomas, also of the US, took gold and St Lucia's Julien Alfred, winner of the women's 100m final, came in second.

The silver medal picked up in the velodrome by Team GB had been less surprising than that earned by Kerr, with the men's sprint team facing the strongest of favourites in the Netherlands, the reigning world and Olympic champions.

The Dutch put down a clear marker

'You can't really tell 100% when you're hitting the wall before you hit it. It came just a little bit too early today'

Jakob Ingebrigtsen
Norwegian challenger

by breaking the world record not once but twice on the way to victory, leaving Jack Carlin, Ed Lowe and Hamish Turnbull almost a second behind their final time. Germany took bronze. Carlin, 27, from Paisley said: "I think we've executed three really solid races there and can be proud of that as a team."

In the skateboarding final on the Place de Concorde, Britain's Sky Brown, 16, secured a bronze, a result she described as "sick".

Brown had been struggling with the left shoulder she dislocated after a fall during a preliminary round but a sensational final run saw her add another medal to the bronze earned in Tokyo at the age of 13.

It was 14-year-old Arisa Trew, from Australia, who took gold while Japan's Cocona Hiraki, 15, repeated her silver medal-winning performance of three years ago. Brown said: "I'm so happy just to be back on the Olympic stage, having the crowd cheer me on, cheering all of us on and really hyping us up was really cool. Getting back on the podium, I mean getting on the podium at all is just sick."

Earlier there had been a reminder of the cruelty of top level sport in the Stade de France when the Olympic adventure of British 400m hurdles champion Lina Nielsen ended when she tripped over the last obstacle in the semi-final. Nielsen, 28, had made public a diagnosis of multiple sclerosis two years ago.

In the Aquatics centre, the British diver Andrea Spendolini-Sirieix also spoke of being happy just to wake up at all on the morning of her diving final after a period of poor mental health, as she missed out on a second Olympic medal.

The 19-year-old diver, who won a bronze last week in the synchronised 10-metre platform with Lois Toulson, came sixth in the individual final. Spendolini-Sirieix said her tears on leaving the pool had not been in response to her performance.

"So I woke up this morning, and like, the first thought that I had was: 'I'm happy that I woke up,' and that's just how it's been for a long time," she said. "I'm just grateful to be alive and to have this experience and to be here with my family."



Sky Brown 16-year-old pushes through injury to take bronze

Alexandra Topping
La Concorde

Aged 11 she survived a near-fatal skateboarding crash; at 12 she fractured her skull; at 13 she won bronze at the Tokyo Olympics; at 15 she tore her knee and at 16 - little more than a week after dislocating her shoulder - Sky Brown took bronze again in the park skateboarding in Paris.

Brown and the 15-year-old Japanese skater, Cocona Hiraki, became the youngest athletes to ever win a medal at two Olympics in the park event at La Concorde yesterday, after being narrowly beaten by 14-year-old Australian Arisa Trew to the gold.

A bronze could be seen as a



◀ The French artistic swimming team competing in the team free routine wearing swim caps decorated with faces, creating a mind-bending illusion at the Aquatics Centre

PHOTOGRAPH: CLIVE ROSE/GETTY IMAGES



◀ Azerbaijan's Mariya Stadnik, right, on her way to being beaten by Mongolia's Otgonjargal Dolgorjavyn in the women's 50kg freestyle wrestling quarter-final yesterday

PHOTOGRAPH: PUNIT PARANJPE/AFP/GETTY



◀ Tahiti's Kauli Vaast, 22, celebrates winning the gold medal in men's surfing for France ahead of Australia's highly fancied Jack Robinson in Teahupo'o, French Polynesia

PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN M HAFEEY/GETTY IMAGES



disappointment for a skater who has added skill upon skill to the already impressive repertoire that won the same medal in Tokyo three years ago.

But after six months of fighting to recover from a serious knee injury, a week when she battled to even take part in this competition, and a morning that had left her struggling to hold back tears of pain, this felt less like a missed opportunity than one seized.

Sometimes it is the taking part that counts - at least if you end up on the podium.

"It was a little scary falling on my shoulders on my last run, and then going to the final," said Brown after the competition. "I had to send it. But I did fight through it, and gave it my best."

By mid afternoon yesterday, at the close of the qualifying round, it was far from clear that Brown, despite securing her place in the final by finishing in fourth, would be able to come out for the last round of the competition, never mind get a medal.

After a relaxed opening turn around the park, she induced panic in her team when she came off her board twice in the next two runs.

The first time she got up with a shrug, but on the second she fell from the board awkwardly on to the shoulder she had dislocated just days before the start of the Games.

She stayed on the floor of the bowl park for a moment and looked to be in pain, before her father, Stuart, rolled her to the edge of one of the

▲ Sky Brown in the women's park skateboarding final at La Concorde yesterday, where she took a bronze medal after battling injury

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID LEVENE/THE GUARDIAN

park's slopes and she climbed up the side.

After the qualifying round, she admitted the fall had been "definitely scary". Asked if she would be able to compete in the final, she said: "All I can do is push through, I think at this point, so I'm just gonna fight through it. For Team GB, for the girls, for my family, my supporters, you know, we're gonna fight."

And fight she did. It was only after the competition had ended that her father confirmed that she had fallen

on her injured left shoulder, and felt it briefly pop out of its socket. "I ran down to her and she said: 'Daddy, it's come out again,'" he said.

"I told her not to worry about it. And then as she got up, she said, 'Oh, I think it's gone back in again.' She was in pain, but she didn't want to show it too much because she was scared of being pulled [from the competition]."

After her teammate, Lola Tamlbling, did not qualify for the final ("They're gonna be buzzing," she said of the support she'd got from her home town of Saltash. "It's gonna be mad when I go back home."), all medal hopes were resting on Brown's narrow, wounded shoulders.

After an hour and a half of being put back together by Team GB physiotherapists, Brown once again looked relaxed as she came out for her first run of the final.

A strong first run scored 80.57, but she fell again after the timer had sounded.

Thankfully this time she got to her feet quickly, but while other competitors used the pause between runs to get into the bowl to practise, Brown remained out of sight. She came out for an audacious second run in which she flipped her board - known as a kickflip indy - over the volcano, generating gasps from the crowd and launching her into second place with 91.60. For her third she did it all again, just better, sneaking her score forward to 92.31 and putting the silver medal into touching distance.

Then Hiraki, with the final run of the tournament, pulled off another astonishing performance to score 92.63. With just 0.32 of a point between them, it was Hiraki in silver and Brown in bronze - with both competitors within a point of the gold medal winner.

Speaking after taking bronze, her earlier pain replaced with her trademark 100-watt smile, Brown said the crowd had helped her through.

"I felt adrenaline and I was just hyped up but I wanted to bring out more," she said, admitting that her father had advised her not to do more extreme tricks for her final run so as not risk further injury.

"I wanted to bring out another trick, another few tricks but Dad didn't want me to," she said. "I wanted to keep it a little safe and didn't want to hurt it even more. I did the best I could do."

Speaking before these Games, the 16-year-old expressed her disappointment at not also qualifying for the surfing. She would do next time, she promised: "I know I've got LA [2028] ahead so I'm going to aim for that and get two gold medals for GB."

After a performance this tenacious, don't put it past her.

'Worms in food' Athletes' meals have not been good enough, says Peaty

PA Media

Adam Peaty has claimed athletes at Paris 2024 have found worms in their food as he criticised catering at the Olympic village. The six-time Olympic medallist complained about the quantity and quality of food as he said it would affect performances.

"The catering isn't good enough for the level the athletes are expected to perform," he told the i. "We need to give the best we possibly can. [In] Tokyo the food was incredible. Rio was incredible. But this time around? There wasn't enough protein options, long queues - waiting 30 minutes because there's no queueing system."

As part of the Games' sustainability pledges, organisers have aimed to make 60% of all meals served meatless and a third plant-based. Peaty said: "The narrative of sustainability has just been pushed on the athletes."

"I want meat; I need meat to perform and that's what I eat at home, so why should I change? I like my fish and people are finding worms in the fish. It's just not good enough. The standard, we're looking at the best of the best in the world, and we're not feeding them the best."

A Paris 2024 spokesperson told the i: "We are listening to the athletes and take their feedback very seriously. Since the opening of the village, our partner Sodexo Live! has been working proactively to adapt supplies to the growing use of the Olympic village restaurants, as well as to the actual consumption by athletes observed over the first few days. As a result, the quantities of certain products have been significantly increased and additional staff have been deployed."



▲ Adam Peaty said he needed to eat meat in order to perform at his best

Trumpeting elephants join goat on ledge as Banksy paints an ark

Zainab Haji

Banksy has unveiled his second animal artwork in 24 hours, this time showing two stencilled elephants reaching towards each other from blocked-out windows on the side of

a house in Chelsea, west London. The anonymous artist verified his latest work in an Instagram post yesterday.

On Monday he revealed a mural portraying a goat perching on top of a narrow ledge on a building near the north end of Kew Bridge, in Brentford, south-west London. The image, on the side of a former name-plate



▲ The stencilled pachyderms appeared on the side of a house a day after the goat was spotted

factory, shows a goat standing precariously as rocks fall down below it.

Banksy left no comment about the works on his social media posts, leading online commentators to theorise about potential symbolism.

Before this week, Banksy's most recent work was an inflatable "migrant boat", complete with inflatable passengers, which was crowdsurfed as the band Idles played at the Glastonbury festival in June. James Cleverly, home secretary at the time, said the stunt was "trivialising" Channel crossings by migrants and

was "vile". The artist responded by saying Cleverly's reaction was "a bit over the top".

At Glastonbury in 2019, Banksy designed a stab vest decorated with a union flag that was worn by Stormzy during his headlining Pyramid stage performance.

In March, Banksy claimed authorship of a mural in Holloway, north London, which featured a mass of green paint - designed to look like foliage - on a wall behind a bare tree with a stencil of a person holding a pressure hose next to it.

Women after menopause to get new osteoporosis treatment

Anna Bawden

More than 14,000 postmenopausal women in England could benefit from a new drug that helps to prevent bone fractures.

Osteoporosis weakens bones and affects 3.8 million people in the UK. It particularly affects older women because during the menopause oestrogen, the hormone important for maintaining bone density and strength, decreases. This can lead to osteoporosis, making broken bones more common.

The condition is linked to more than half a million fractures annually in the UK, at a cost of more than £4.5bn. Fractures can be very painful and limit a person's independence. They are also associated with increased mortality.

Until now, women with osteoporosis after menopause and at very high risk of fracture have been treated with romosozumab or teriparatide, followed by bisphosphonates such as alendronic acid. But some patients do not respond to, or cannot tolerate, these drugs.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) will today announce the approval of a the drug abaloparatide for use by the health service. It will be available for use on the NHS in England within three

months. The drug, which is sold as Eladynos and made by Theramex, increases bone density by stimulating the cells that make new bones.

Abaloparatide has been recommended for patients at high risk of bone fractures, with NICE estimating that it could benefit more than 14,000 women who have gone through the menopause.

Abaloparatide is administered via a pre-filled pen, and injected once daily at home.

Prof Jonathan Benger, chief medical officer and deputy chief executive of NICE, said: "The independent committee heard from patients about how debilitating osteoporosis can be and how it impacts all aspects of day-to-day life, such as not going out for a walk because they are fearful of falling and having a fracture. This can impair mental and physical health. Our focus is on enabling access to care that improves quality of life while offering value to the taxpayer."

"Abaloparatide has been found by our independent committee to be clinically and cost effective at reducing the risk of fracture."

The Royal Osteoporosis Society (ROS) welcomed NICE's announcement. Given the prevalence of bone fractures among women over 50 and the extent of disability these breaks caused, the paucity of new treatments over the last decade and a half had been a huge cause for concern, said Craig Jones, ROS chief executive.

Jones added: "This will change many thousands of lives for the better and we're looking forward to seeing the impact it makes in communities across the country."

Prof Kamila Hawthorne, chair of the Royal College of GPs, said: "GPs will always do [their] best to develop a treatment plan with patients based on all the various factors impacting on their health - and sometimes first-line treatments won't be appropriate or effective - so it's positive to see a new treatment option has been approved by NICE for us to consider. We hope that this will help patients who have osteoporosis but have not responded to other treatments."

But Kate Muir, a menopause expert and campaigner, said that women needed earlier intervention. "It's great that new drugs like abaloparatide are available but this is shutting the door after the horse has bolted."

Studies showed hormone replacement therapy could increase bone density by up to 8% and reduce the risk of fractures, she said.

"But this public health message is not getting out to women, who should be informed that body-identical transdermal HRT is much safer than previous forms, and it helps to keep bones healthy," Muir added.



▲ The drug is aimed at preventing fractures by increasing bone density

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'Hobbit' arm bone on Flores points to tiniest ancient human recorded

Hannah Devlin
Science correspondent

The remains of the smallest ancient human on record, who was just one metre tall, have been discovered on the Indonesian island of Flores.

The fossil arm bone belonged to a tiny adult human who roamed the island 700,000 years ago alongside pygmy elephants, Komodo dragons and giant rats the size of rabbits.

The bone is thought to be that of a very early individual of the extinct "hobbit" species *Homo floresiensis* that has perplexed scientists since its discovery two decades ago.

The latest fossil suggests the species underwent an early and dramatic reduction in body size in response to the unique evolutionary pressures of being marooned on an island.

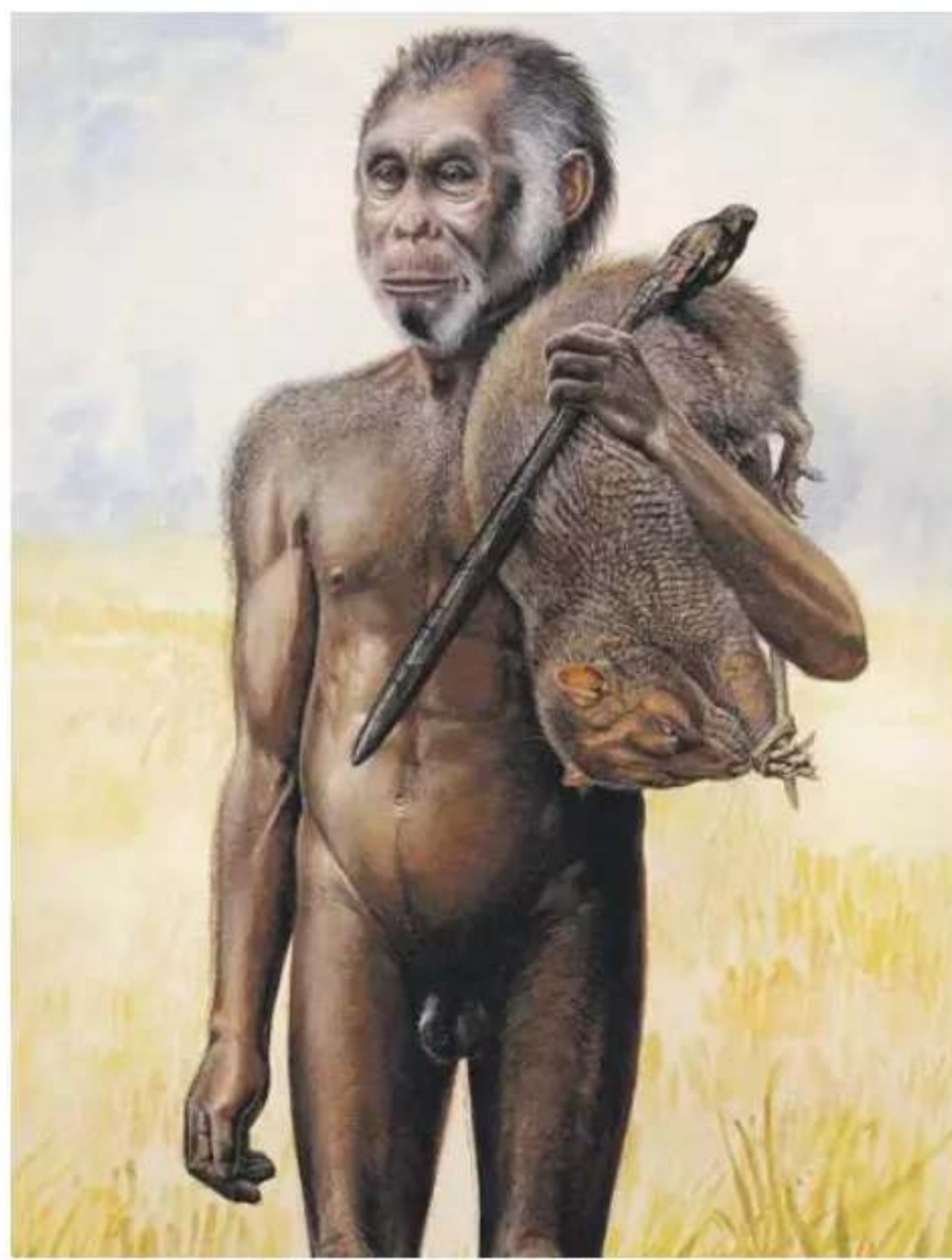
"Island dwarfism was well known before from fossil remains of mega-fauna on islands in the Mediterranean and Indonesia that were miniature

versions of their mainland ancestors," said Dr Gert van den Bergh, a palaeontologist and co-author at the University of Wollongong, Australia.

Since the discovery of the first "hobbit" fossils, dating from 60,000 years ago, the miniature human's evolutionary origins have been disputed. Some experts have questioned whether floresiensis was even a unique species or simply a tribe of modern humans afflicted by a congenital stunting disease, while others proposed they were related to a small more primitive ape-like species.

The scientists behind the latest discovery say the find adds weight to the theory that the "hobbits" were descended from *Homo erectus* or Java man, an archaic hominin roughly similar in stature to us, who became stranded on Flores.

The tiny arm bone is similar in anatomy to previously discovered "hobbit" skeletons, while a newly unearthed pair of teeth from the same site bear a resemblance to *Homo*



erectus teeth, although much smaller. Based on the estimated length of the bone, the team calculated the body height of the ancient human was about 100cm. This is about 6cm shorter than the estimated height of the 60,000-year-old skeleton found about 46 miles away also on Flores.

"This 700,000-year-old adult

humerus is not just shorter than that of [the original] *Homo floresiensis*, it is the smallest upper arm bone known from the hominin fossil record worldwide," said Prof Adam Brumm, a co-author of the paper, from Griffith University's Australian Research Centre for Human Evolution. "This very rare specimen confirms our



▲ The arm bone found on Flores that scientists think is of the species *Homo floresiensis*, left, which evolved on the island to stand just one metre tall

hypothesis that the ancestors of *Homo floresiensis* were extremely small in body size. However, it's now apparent from the tiny proportions of this limb bone that the early progenitors of the 'hobbit' were even smaller than we previously thought."

Island dwarfism is thought to emerge because a smaller body size can be advantageous in surviving periodic food shortages on islands, and because a large size is less of a bonus with no large carnivorous mammals to contend with.

Some questions remain, including how the ancestors of floresiensis got to the island in the first place. Stone tools show the island was occupied as early as a million years ago.

"It was generally thought that only modern humans with boat technology [could have reached] an oceanic island surrounded by deep sea straits such as Flores," said van den Bergh.

Prof Chris Stringer, head of human origins at the Natural History Museum, London, who was not involved in the research, said: "Being able to track a single evolving hominin lineage over that timescale holds great promise for research. Many researchers assume a dwarfing process occurred on Flores, but there is currently no way of knowing that since the process could have already started on other islands."

The findings are published in the journal *Nature Communications*.

SUDAN FAMINE APPEAL • SUDAN FAMINE APPEAL • SUDAN FAMINE APPEAL •

SUDAN EMERGENCY APPEAL

FAMINE HAS JUST BEEN DECLARED IN PARTS OF SUDAN – WILL YOU SEND URGENT HELP?

The reality is stark: people in Sudan are starving to death. Famine has been declared in a camp for displaced people in North Darfur. Evidence shows two other camps may also be facing famine.

Millions have fled their homes since a brutal civil war began in April 2023, desperately seeking safety both within Sudan and in neighbouring countries.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, has teams on the ground delivering lifesaving aid wherever possible. But the situation is critical – we urgently need your help.

Please will you give £82 to provide the essentials a family needs to survive?

Your gift can provide shelter, bedding and access to food and clean water. These are the very basics people need to survive.

The situation is exacerbated by a shortage of funding and lack of access. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, has called on warring parties to immediately facilitate humanitarian access to communities that require lifesaving aid, and expressed alarm at the scale of the crisis:

"The level of suffering is truly unconscionable."

As in so many conflicts, it is civilians – men, women, and children who are simply trying to live their lives – who suffer most.

We must show them that they have not been forgotten.



Hanan Abdelm Mahmoud and her daughter, Amna, are among nearly 200,000 Sudanese refugees waiting for relocation at Adré in eastern Chad, a few hundred metres from the border with Sudan.

Eighteen-year-old Nyauke, who was forced to flee Sudan, speaks of the grim reality:

"Men were shooting guns on our street and planes were dropping bombs around us."

But for those who escaped violence into neighbouring countries like Chad, South Sudan and Egypt, the ordeal is far from over. A lack of funding is causing a dangerous shortage of the essentials people need to survive: shelter and access to clean water and food. This is what you can help provide.

Your support can help the UNHCR team in Sudan and neighbouring countries provide lifesaving aid. Every moment counts in an emergency of this magnitude. Please respond urgently.

£82 could provide lifesaving essentials to a family fleeing violence.

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unrefugees.org.uk/sudan-famine

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☐ Tick here, if you don't want to receive an acknowledgement by post

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First name

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*Provide your details above to receive updates by email and/or phone on the impact of your support and how you can donate and help in other ways.

Please return this form along with your cheque to:

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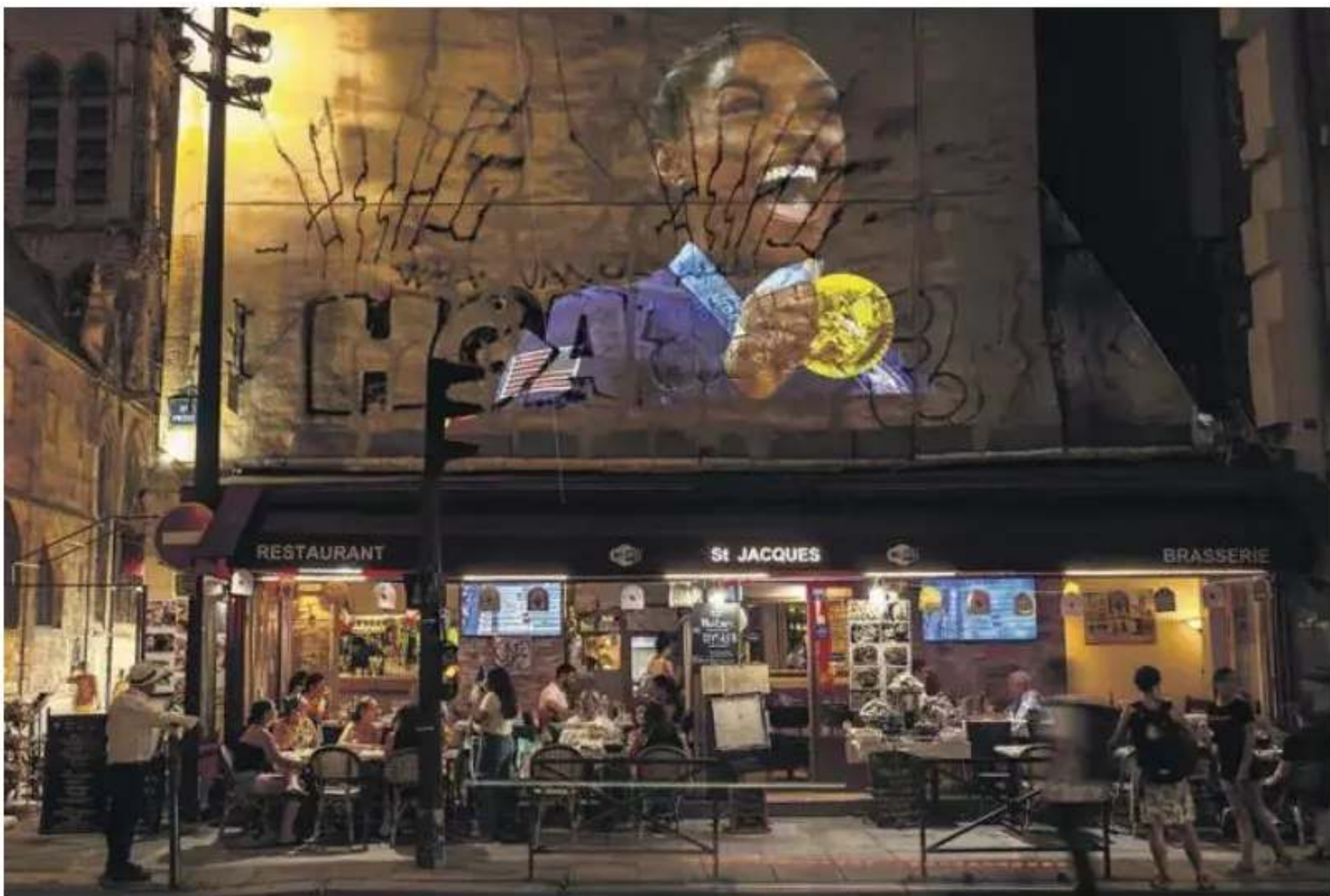
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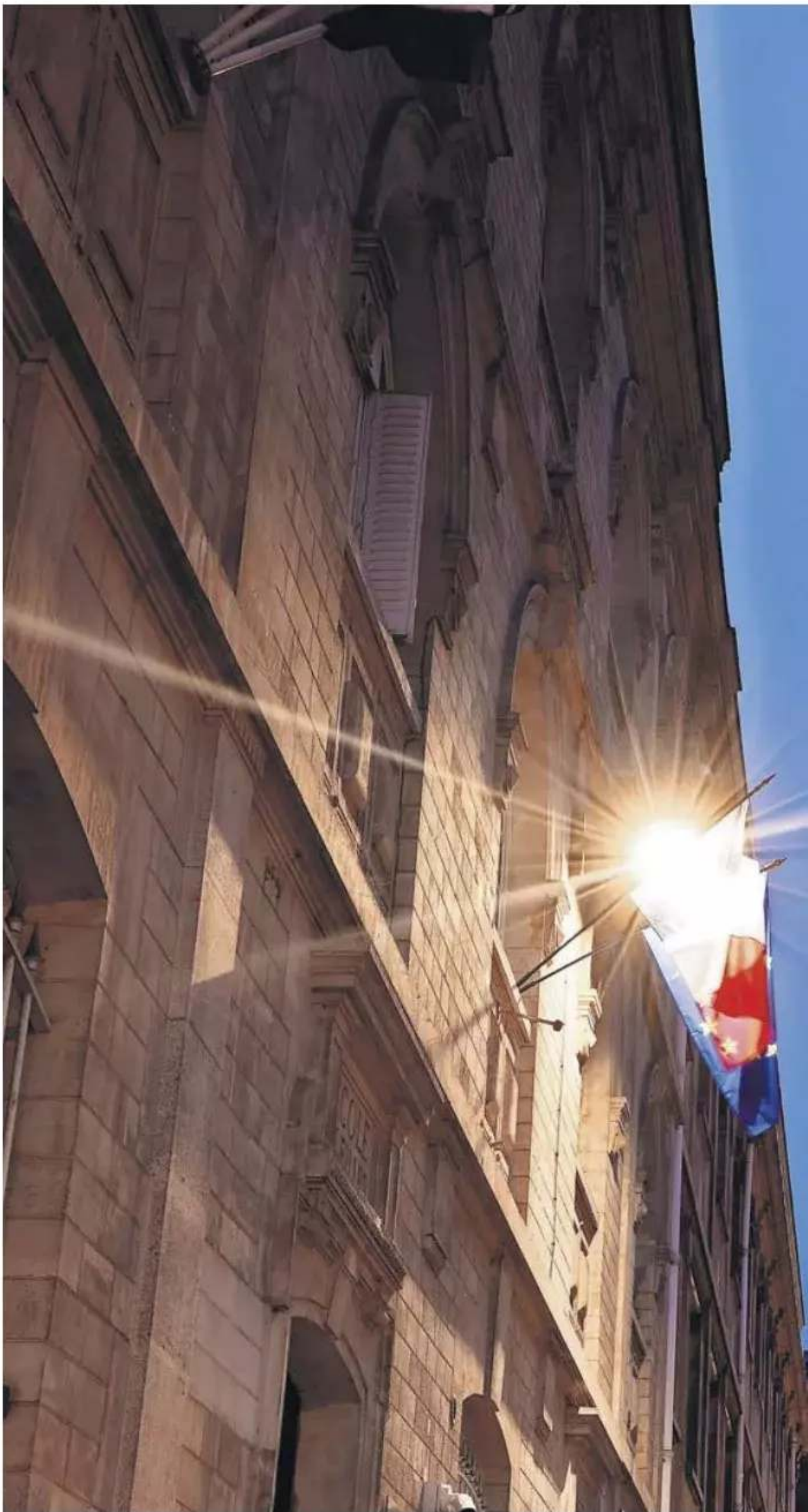
► **Light fantastique**
A projection of Simone Biles celebrating winning team gymnastics gold, part of Parisienne Projections, which displays heroics and disappointments from the Olympic Games on Paris landmarks
PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID RAMOS/GETTY IMAGES



▲ An image of the US sprinter Noah Lyles celebrating winning gold in the men's 100m final projected on the Pont de Bir Hakeim
PHOTOGRAPH: RYAN PIERSE/GETTY IMAGES



◀ Moldova's Victor Ciobanu and Ri Se-ung of North Korea in the men's Greco-Roman wrestling
PHOTOGRAPH: HÉCTOR VIVAS/GETTY IMAGES





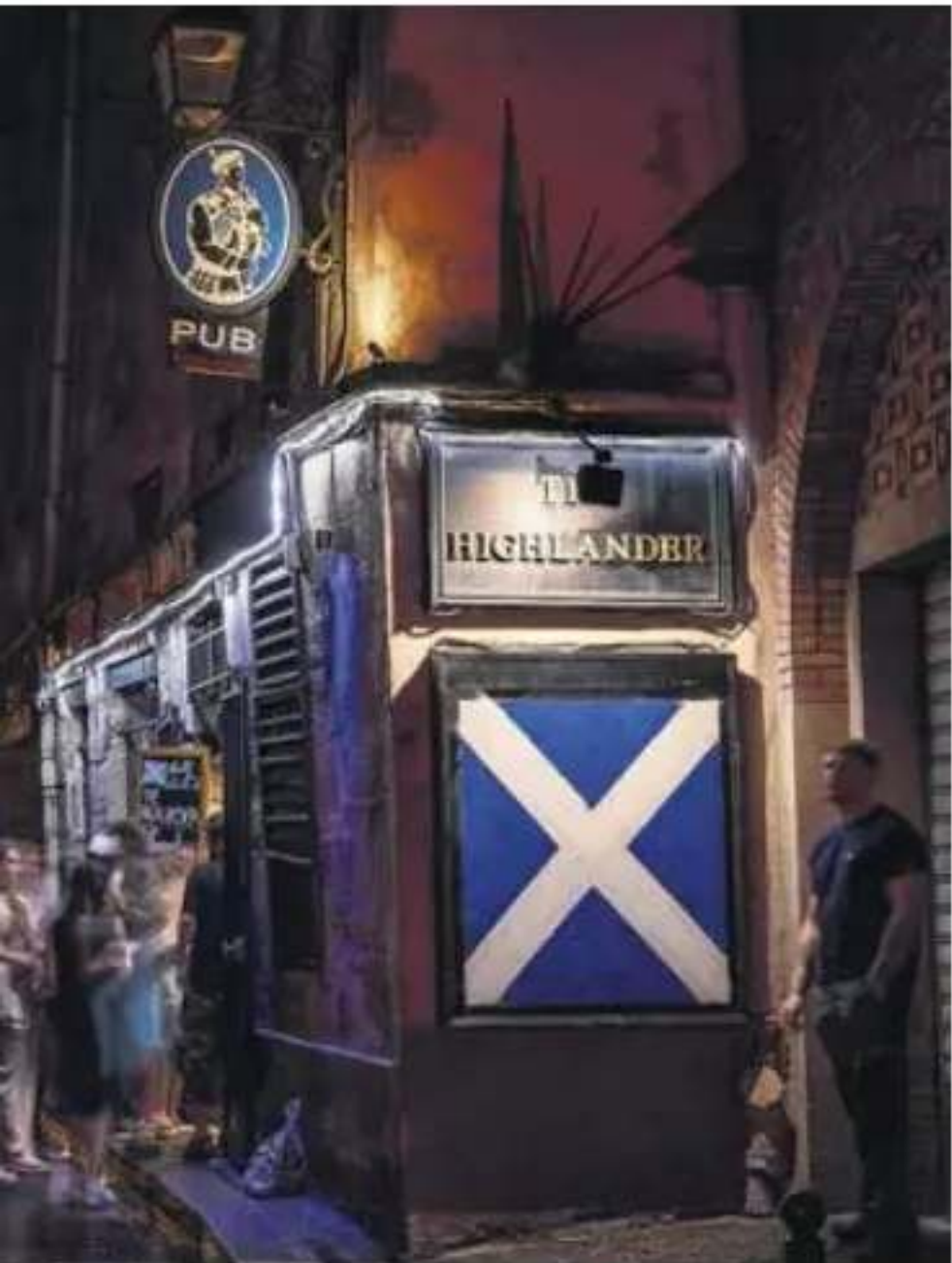
◀ *Julien Alfred from St Lucia after winning the women's 100m final and becoming the country's first ever Olympic medallist*

PHOTOGRAPH: CARMEN MANDATO/GETTY IMAGES



▲ *France's Teddy Riner bites his gold medal on the podium after winning the men's +100kg judo final*

PHOTOGRAPH: HÉCTOR VIVAS/GETTY IMAGES



▲ *Andy Murray after his final tennis match, projected outside a pub in Saint-Germain-des-Prés*

PHOTOGRAPH: RYAN PIERSE/GETTY IMAGES



◀ *France's Pauline Ferrand Prévot on the podium after taking gold in the women's mountain biking*

PHOTOGRAPH: CARMEN MANDATO/GETTY IMAGES

World



Bangladesh parliament dissolved after protesters issue ultimatum

▲ Anti-government protesters gather at Parliament House

PHOTOGRAPH: ZABED HASNAIN CHOWDHURY/
SOPA IMAGES/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK

Redwan Ahmed
Dhaka

The president of Bangladesh has dissolved the country's parliament after an ultimatum issued by the coordinators of student protests that forced the resignation on Monday of the prime minister, Sheikh Hasina.

The office of the president, Mohammed Shahabuddin, announced that the former prime minister and opposition leader Begum Khaleda Zia had been officially released from prison and given a full presidential pardon.

The announcements came as student protest leaders were in a meeting yesterday with the army chief, Gen

Waker-Uz-Zaman, after the military announced it would form an interim government following the departure of Hasina.

On Monday, Hasina resigned and fled the country after at least 300 people were killed in a crackdown on demonstrations that began as student protests against preferential job quotas and swelled into a movement demanding her downfall.

Celebrations erupted on Monday after Hasina resigned, and continued overnight. The prime minister's residence was overrun and looted and several of the ruling party's offices were set alight.

Reports suggested calm had returned to the streets yesterday and

many of the crowds were helping in the clear-up or congregating in peaceful gatherings around the capital, Dhaka, and other towns and cities.

Zaman held talks with leaders of big political parties - excluding Hasina's long-ruling Awami League - to discuss the way ahead.

An interim government would hold elections as soon as possible after consulting all parties and stakeholders, Shahabuddin said in a televised address late on Monday.

He said the release of the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist party (BNP) chair, Zia, 78, who was convicted in a corruption case in 2018 but moved to a hospital a year later as her health deteriorated, was

"unanimously decided". She has denied the charges against her.

Nahid Islam, one of the key coordinators of the student protest movement, issued a fresh ultimatum to the president in a video statement, demanding the dissolution of parliament and warning of further protests if this demand were not met.

"We still see the existing parliament in place even after the people's uprising ousted the fascist Hasina government. So, we are giving an ultimatum: by 3pm today, it has to be dissolved," he said. He also urged people to remain calm and peaceful.

Early yesterday, there were international commendations for the Bangladesh army's conduct. The

White House said: "The United States has long called for respecting democratic rights in Bangladesh, and we urge that the interim government formation be democratic and inclusive. We commend the army for the restraint they have showed today."

In the UK, the British foreign secretary, David Lammy, called for a full UN investigation into the killings.

The coordinators of the student protests yesterday called for the formation of an interim government with the economist and Nobel peace laureate Muhammad Yunus as its chief adviser.

Yunus, who was in Paris, had agreed to the role, a spokesperson told Reuters. They said he planned to return to Bangladesh immediately after undergoing a minor medical procedure in the French capital.

Additional reporting
Reuters and Agence France-Presse

Chant penalty
Berlin court convicts
pro-Palestine activist
 Page 27

'Electoral fraud'
Evidence mounts but
Maduro isn't budging
 Page 29



Sheikh Hasina

Former rebel

seen as enemy

of democracy

Tracy McVeigh

The world's longest-serving female leader was, according to her son, Sajeeb Wazed, "in good spirits, but disheartened and disappointed in the lack of gratitude of the people of Bangladesh".

After weeks of protests, more than 300 deaths and increased international criticism of her government's slide into autocracy, the rule of Sheikh Hasina ended on Monday as she fled the country she had led for a combined total of more than 20 years.

The daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bangladesh's first president and the leader of his country to independence from Pakistan in 1971, Hasina fled to India, where she was born in 1947 and where she was granted asylum in 1975 after a military coup caused the deaths of most of her family.

Ironically for a woman deposed by a student uprising, Hasina built a reputation as a student leader and feminist while she was studying literature at Dhaka University. Her political drive resurfaced when she returned to Bangladesh from a six-year exile in India in 1981, after being elected leader of her late father's Awami League (AL) party.

Hasina joined forces with a woman whom she would later imprison: Khaleda Zia, leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist party (BNP), and widow of Ziaur Rahman, a military officer and politician who served as president from 1977 until his assassination in 1981. With an astute show of unity, at least on the surface, the two women led a pro-democracy

mass uprising in 1990 that forced the resignation of the despotic president, Hussain Muhammad Ershad, a general who had seized power in 1982.

The two women slipped into a fierce rivalry before the resulting elections and it was Zia who won power in the 1991 vote. Hasina led the AL to victory in 1996; Zia snatched back the premiership in the 2001 election. In those years of turmoil Hasina spent time in prison on conspiracy charges.

Referring to the traditional honorific for Muslim women, the Bangladeshi media called it the "battle of the Begums" but as Hasina held power from 2009 through the next five elections, the term began to slip from use. Zia was sentenced to 17 years on corruption charges in 2018.

As prime minister, Hasina took major steps in hauling Bangladesh on to the global economic stage. She was internationally lauded for bringing stability to the nation and for her decisive action in tackling Islamic extremism.

Hasina was globally praised as a humanitarian for welcoming into Bangladesh the million Rohingya refugees who poured over the border in 2017 to escape genocidal attacks by the Myanmar army.

Winning hefty development funding from the World Bank among others, Hasina pushed through major infrastructure projects and digitalisation. Bangladesh's economy grew by an average of 6% annually since 2009 and poverty levels dropped. One of the world's poorest countries when it gained independence, today more than 95% of the 170 million population have access to electricity, with per capita income overtaking that of India in 2020.

The benefits of the economic growth achieved by her government were felt mostly by the rich - whose wealth has grown at among the fastest rate of anywhere in the world - while everyone else struggled with rising living costs.

This inequity drove the students in their protests against Hasina and the quota system, which denied many of them government jobs after having had to fund their own university studies.

Last year she vowed to turn Bangladesh into a "prosperous and developed country" but with about 18 million young people out of work, the promise seemed thin. Her premiership was increasingly tarnished by human rights abuses in a Bangladesh that was backsliding into autocracy. Reports grew of extrajudicial killings, the imprisonment and disappearances of journalists and opposition figures, and corruption and wealth appropriation by her government and associates.

The daughter of the revolution was, said her critics, destroying the very democracy she had grown up battling for.



No jobs, no trust

Young Africans' economic woes fuel demonstrations

Rachel Savage

Young protesters in Kenya successfully demanded the withdrawal of a bill that would have raised taxes on everything from bread to vegetable oil and sanitary towels. Inspired by their neighbours, Ugandans marched against corruption. Nigerians rallied against "bad governance" and the soaring cost of living.

Since the Covid pandemic, people have also taken to the streets in Ghana, Angola, Malawi and Senegal. While each protest has had unique drivers, they have some things in common - booming young populations struggling with high inflation, a lack of good jobs and a political class they don't trust.

"Here in Kenya, if you look at these protests, actually, they were led by educated people. But most of them [were] jobless," said Anthony Kamande, an inequality researcher at Oxfam who is based in Nairobi.

Africa is a young continent - 70% of the population is under the age of 30, according to the UN. Its population is expected to almost double in 30 years, to 2.2 billion.

Gen Z and millennial Africans are better educated than the generations before them. Of 22 countries that provided data to Unesco for 2011 to 2021, the

proportion of students going on to higher education fell in only three. However, more than 10 million people enter the workforce a year in sub-Saharan Africa, vying for just 3m jobs, the World Bank says.

Many who don't get formal work hustle in the badly paid and risky informal sector. Unemployment was ranked as the most important problem by 18- to 35-year-olds surveyed by the pan-African survey organisation Afrobarometer.

On top of this, the economic shocks of the past few years - Covid, Russia's invasion of Ukraine sending food, fuel and fertiliser prices soaring, and the US central bank's interest rate rises pushing up borrowing costs globally - have triggered cost of living crises in many countries.

Inflation was still double-digits in about a third of sub-Saharan African countries earlier this year, the International Monetary Fund says. In Nigeria, it is running above 34% after the removal of a costly fuel subsidy and a botched series of currency devaluations.

These policy changes, which started when Bola Tinubu became president in May 2024, didn't cause protests immediately. Razia Khan, Middle East and Africa chief economist at Standard Chartered bank, said: "Prior to the presidential election in 2023, each of the three candidates said FX [foreign exchange] liberalisation needs to happen and the fuel subsidy is unaffordable and needs to go. There was just an acceptance on the part of Nigerians."

She added: "It's a year after the initial fuel subsidy removal that we're seeing protests and that's really driven by the fact that the cost of living crisis has not eased meaningfully and that inflation continues to be at runaway levels."

◀ *Protesters demonstrating in Lagos, Nigeria, this week against bad governance and economic hardship*
 PHOTOGRAPH: FRANCIS KOKOROKO/REUTERS

In contrast, in Kenya, tax rises were never broadly accepted. Protesters "feel that those in government, and parliamentarians in some cases, should also bear the pain by cutting spending", said Yvonne Mhango, Africa economist at Bloomberg, pointing to the now-axed offices of Kenya's first and second ladies.

Kamande, the Oxfam researcher, also blamed rising inequality and a debt crisis that has led to cash-strapped governments trying to raise taxes on ordinary people. "We need debt cancellation. It's long overdue - it should have happened yesterday," he said.

Heavy debt burdens have swallowed up public spending. Kenya spends a third of government revenues servicing its debt. In Ghana, half of government income went on debt servicing in 2022 before it defaulted at the end of that year.

Ethiopia is also restructuring its debt, while trying to avoid the soaring inflation that Nigeria has experienced since devaluing its currency. The east African country let its birr currency weaken 30% against the US dollar on Monday. Later that day, the IMF signed off on a \$3.4bn (£2.7bn) four-year loan. Ethiopia is also expected to get \$16.6bn from the World Bank over the next three years.

While an artificially strong exchange rate is not necessarily sustainable, the fallout from devaluations can be painful, said Daouda Sembene, the chief executive of the Dakar-based consultancy AfriCatalyst. "Attention also needs to be put ... to make sure that those who are likely to suffer from it are protected," said the former IMF executive director.

Many of the pressures fuelling recent protests were not going away, said Charlie Robertson, head of macro-strategy at FIM Partners, which manages investments in emerging market countries: "Political protest is all that educated youth have."



▶ *Protests for the withdrawal of a finance bill in Kenya were youth-led*



Sheikh Hasina was once a student leader

'Political protest is all that educated youth have'

Charlie Robertson
 FIM Partners

Bloomberg disciplines staff over 'premature' report of prisoner swap

Andrew Roth
New York

Bloomberg News said it had taken "disciplinary action" against editorial staff after the outlet "prematurely" published news of the historic prisoner swap between Russia and the United States last week that it said could have endangered the safety of the Americans being released.

In an email to staff on Monday, the editor-in-chief, John Micklethwait, wrote that a number of staff members had been disciplined.

At least one reporter on the story appears to have been fired in a rare case in which a journalist was punished for a decision to publish a major news story that would probably have been reviewed by senior editors.

In a letter to staff, the contents of which were confirmed by the Guardian, Micklethwait wrote: "Last Thursday, we prematurely published a story on the release of Evan



▲ Joe Biden and Kamala Harris talk to Evan Gershkovich on his release

Gershkovich and the other prisoners, which could have endangered the negotiated swap that set them free. Even if our story mercifully ended up making no difference, it was a clear violation of the editorial standards which have made this newsroom so trusted around the world."

The news outlet published its scoop that Wall Street Journal reporter Gershkovich and a number of other American citizens were being released as part of the prisoner swap – the largest between Moscow

and Washington since the cold war – at 7.41am ET (12.41pm BST), while the plane carrying them was still en route to Ankara for the exchange. Soon after, a Bloomberg editor wrote on X: "It is one of the greatest honors of my career to have helped break this news. I love my job and my colleagues."

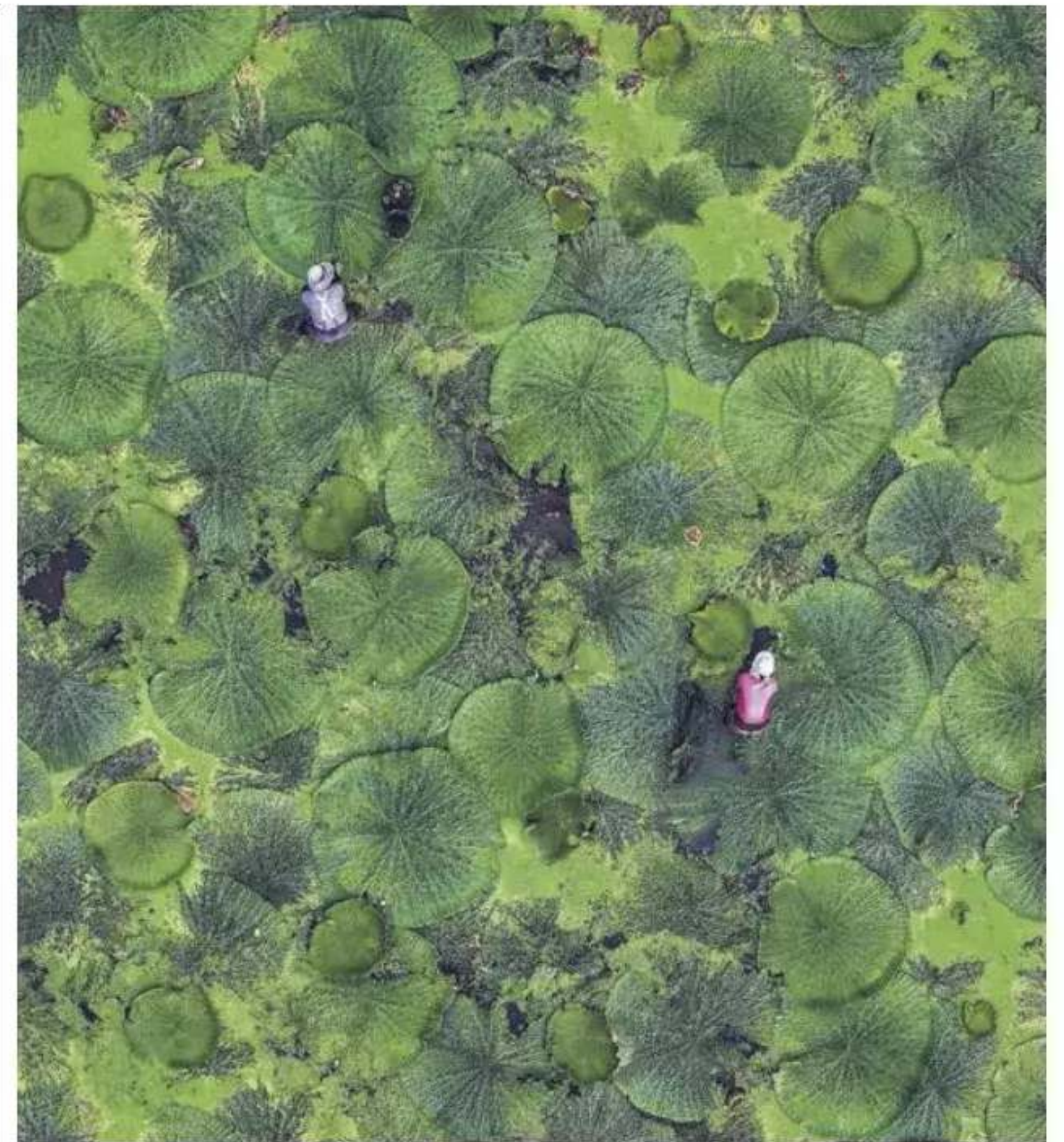
The report elicited outrage from other outlets that had been holding the news under embargo until the exchange was completed and the prisoners were safely out of Russian custody. The tweet was later deleted.

Micklethwait said that he had written apologies to the US hostages who had been involved in the swap, which traded 16 US, German and Russian citizens for eight Russians. He added that the paper had taken disciplinary action after "a full investigation" and would be reviewing its processes.

Jennifer Jacobs, a White House reporter for Bloomberg News, was no longer with the company, according to reports by New York Magazine and the Washington Post.

In a post on X, Jacobs said she did not knowingly break any embargo and said she had worked closely with editors on the story. "As a journalist, the idea that I would jeopardise the safety of a fellow reporter is deeply upsetting on a level that's difficult to describe," she wrote.

A spokesperson for Bloomberg News declined to comment.



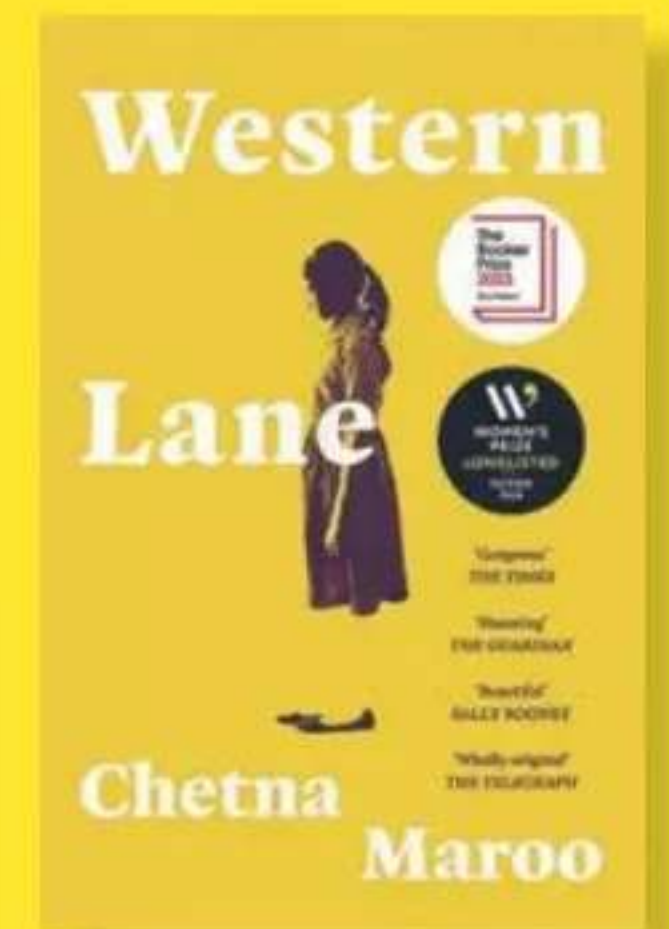
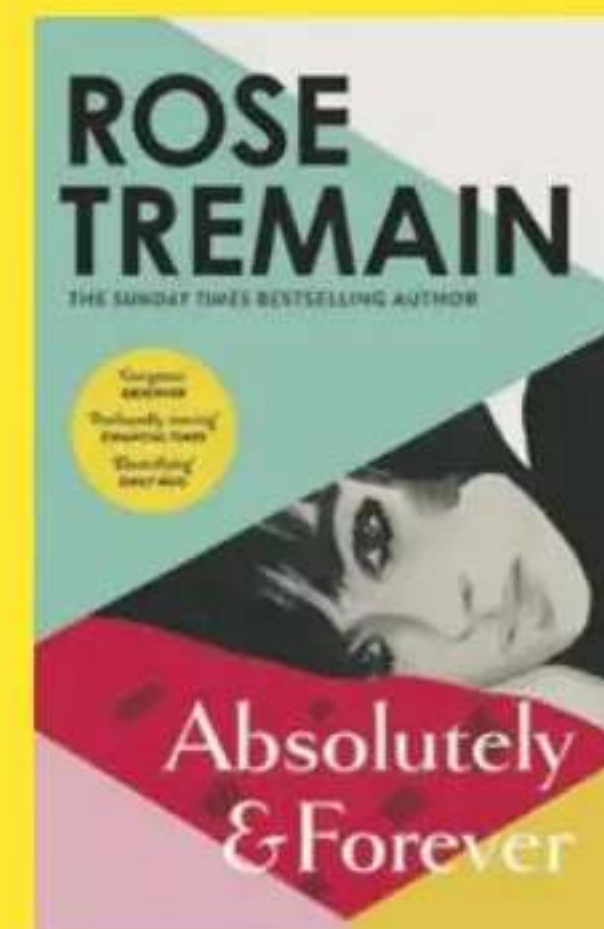
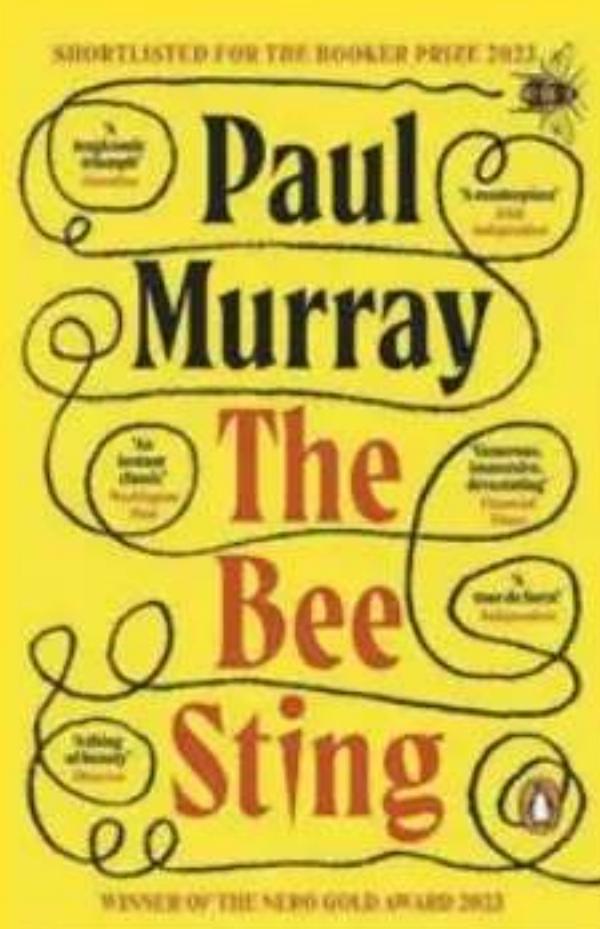
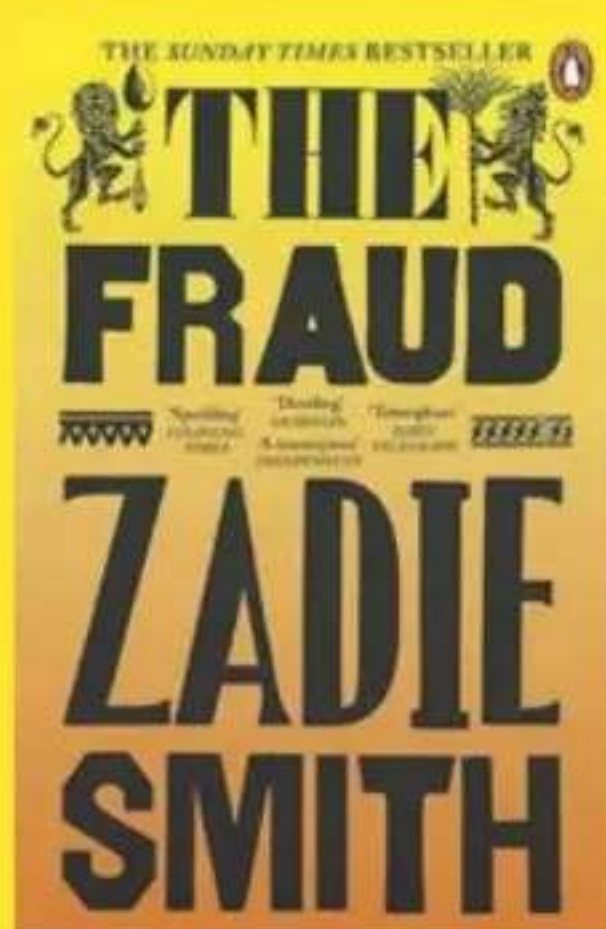
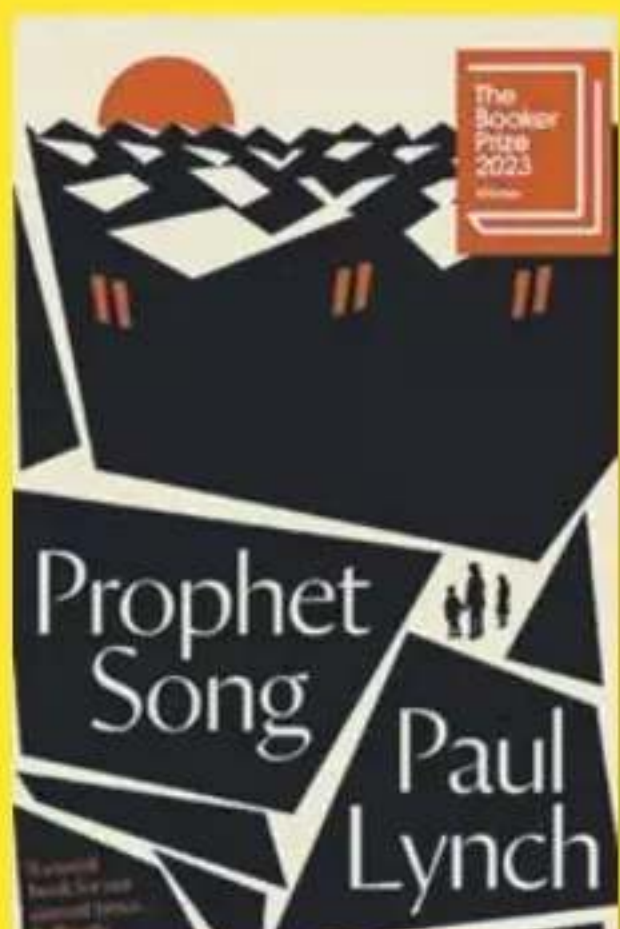
PHOTOGRAPH:
AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Lily pickers Farm workers harvest the seeds of the prickly water lily or *Euryale ferox* in Taizhou in eastern China. Makhana seeds, also called fox nuts, are a popular snack in Asia.

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Hamas names military leader Sinwar as new political chief

Andrew Roth
New York

Hamas has named Yahya Sinwar as the head of its political bureau, elevating the hardline militant to the group's top post after the assassination in Tehran of his predecessor.

Sinwar, the Hamas military leader who is seen as the mastermind behind the 7 October attacks against Israel, is believed to be hiding in the series of tunnels underneath Gaza. He is the group's chief decision-maker in Gaza, and is believed to hold control over the estimated 120 Israeli hostages who are still in Hamas's custody.

Sinwar succeeds Ismail Haniyeh, who died in a bombing attack last week that Hamas and Iranian officials blamed on Israel. The assassination

came during the inauguration of Iran's new president and has raised fears of a larger war involving Iran, which has promised to retaliate against Israel for the attack on its soil.

Haniyeh was a key figure in the talks between Israel and Hamas over a ceasefire, and was seen as an intermediary between Israel and Sinwar.

He was seen as a relative moderate, directing Hamas's delegations in talks mediated by Egypt, Qatar and the US aimed at a ceasefire and hostage and prisoner release deal.

Sinwar is a founding member of Hamas and is seen as the group's most powerful figure. A former head of the group's intelligence service, Sinwar spent 23 years in Israeli prisons as he served four life sentences for attempted murder and sabotage.

Sinwar was released in a 2011 swap

in which Israel traded 1,000 prisoners for Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier who had been captured five years earlier by Hamas. Sinwar returned to militancy and said he had concluded that capturing Israeli soldiers was the key to freeing Palestinian prisoners.

Sinwar's elevation will raise further doubts about the potential for any ceasefire deal to be struck. He is believed to have launched the 7 October attack from Gaza without informing the political leadership, which Haniyeh led in Qatar.

"In electing Sinwar to head Hamas, the organisation lays to rest any differences between external and internal leaders and whatever illusions of moderation existed to reveal its true face," wrote Aaron David Miller, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Israel claims it killed Hamas's military commander, Mohammed Deif, in a strike in July. Hamas denies this. Another senior political figure, Saleh al-Arouri, was killed in January.

The policy of aiming to kill Hamas's leadership, including those from the more moderate political wing, has increased tensions between the US and Israel. Last week Joe Biden reportedly told Benjamin Netanyahu he was intentionally sabotaging efforts to conclude a ceasefire. Netanyahu argued the assassination in Tehran would delay negotiations but ultimately speed up a ceasefire by putting pressure on Hamas.

Responding to Sinwar's appointment, the Israeli military spokesperson R Adm Daniel Hagari said: "There is only one place for Yahya Sinwar, and it is beside Mohammed Deif and the rest of the October 7 terrorists. That is the only place we're preparing and intending for him."

A Hamas spokesperson, Osama Hamdan, said Sinwar would continue the ceasefire negotiations. "The problem in negotiations is not the change in Hamas," he said, blaming Israel and the US for the failure to seal a deal.

Germany Pro-Palestine activist fined for 'river to the sea' chant

Deborah Cole
Berlin

A Berlin court has convicted a pro-Palestinian activist of condoning a crime for leading a chant of the slogan "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free" at a rally four days after the Hamas attacks on Israel, in what her defence team called a defeat for free speech.

The presiding judge, Birgit Balzer, ordered a 22-year-old German-Iranian national, Ava Moayeri, to pay a €600 (£515) fine, rejecting her argument that she only meant to express support for "peace and justice" in the Middle East by chanting the phrase on a busy Berlin street.

Balzer said she "could not comprehend" the logic of previous German court rulings that determined the saying was "ambiguous", while to her it was clear it "denied the right of the state of Israel to exist".

She said this opinion could be covered by the freedom of expression in Germany but that the slogan's use had to be evaluated in the context of "the biggest massacre of Jews since the Shoah [the Holocaust] - that is the elephant in the room".

The case, heard under tight security, was one of several since the 7 October Hamas attacks in Israel and the subsequent destruction of Gaza that have examined Germany's strict limits on pro-Palestinian protests. Moayeri's lawyers called it the first trial in Berlin that centred on the use of the politically charged phrase.

Balzer noted that the slogan is particularly controversial in Germany, which considers support for Israel to be a matter of *Staatsräson*, or reason of state, due to its responsibility for the Holocaust. She added that Germans had an obligation to make Jews in the country feel "safe and comfortable", particularly in the face of a rise in antisemitic crimes since 7 October.

About 100 protesters gathered outside the courthouse could be heard chanting "Free free Palestine" as the verdict was read out.

The sentence for Moayeri, who had no previous criminal record, came in below the €900 fine demanded by state prosecutors, who later said they would consider an appeal.

Alexander Gorski, Moayeri's defence lawyer, condemned what he called a win for "state oppression" and said he would challenge the verdict at a higher court.

'The biggest massacre of Jews since the Shoah - that is the elephant in the room'

Birgit Balzer
Presiding judge



◀ *Yahya Sinwar is seen as the mastermind of the 7 October attacks on southern Israel. He replaces the assassinated Ismail Haniyeh, who was a more moderate figure involved in ceasefire negotiations*

PHOTOGRAPH: ALI JADALLAH/ANADOLU/GETTY IMAGES

Iran Leaders reportedly told by Putin to not hit Israeli civilians

Patrick Wintour
Diplomatic editor

Vladimir Putin has reportedly told Iran to avoid civilian casualties in any retaliatory attack on Israel for the assassination of the Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh.

The intervention underlines the constraints Tehran faces as it frames its response. The call for restraint is likely to be echoed by many foreign

ministers from the 57 countries in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation at a meeting in Jeddah today.

The meeting - called by Iran and Pakistan - will involve unanimous condemnation of the killing of Haniyeh as an escalatory and illegal act by Israel, but Iranian diplomats will also be working to avoid being left isolated by the more cautious Gulf states.

The warning by Putin, a close ally of Iran, was reportedly delivered by Sergei Shoigu, Russia's security

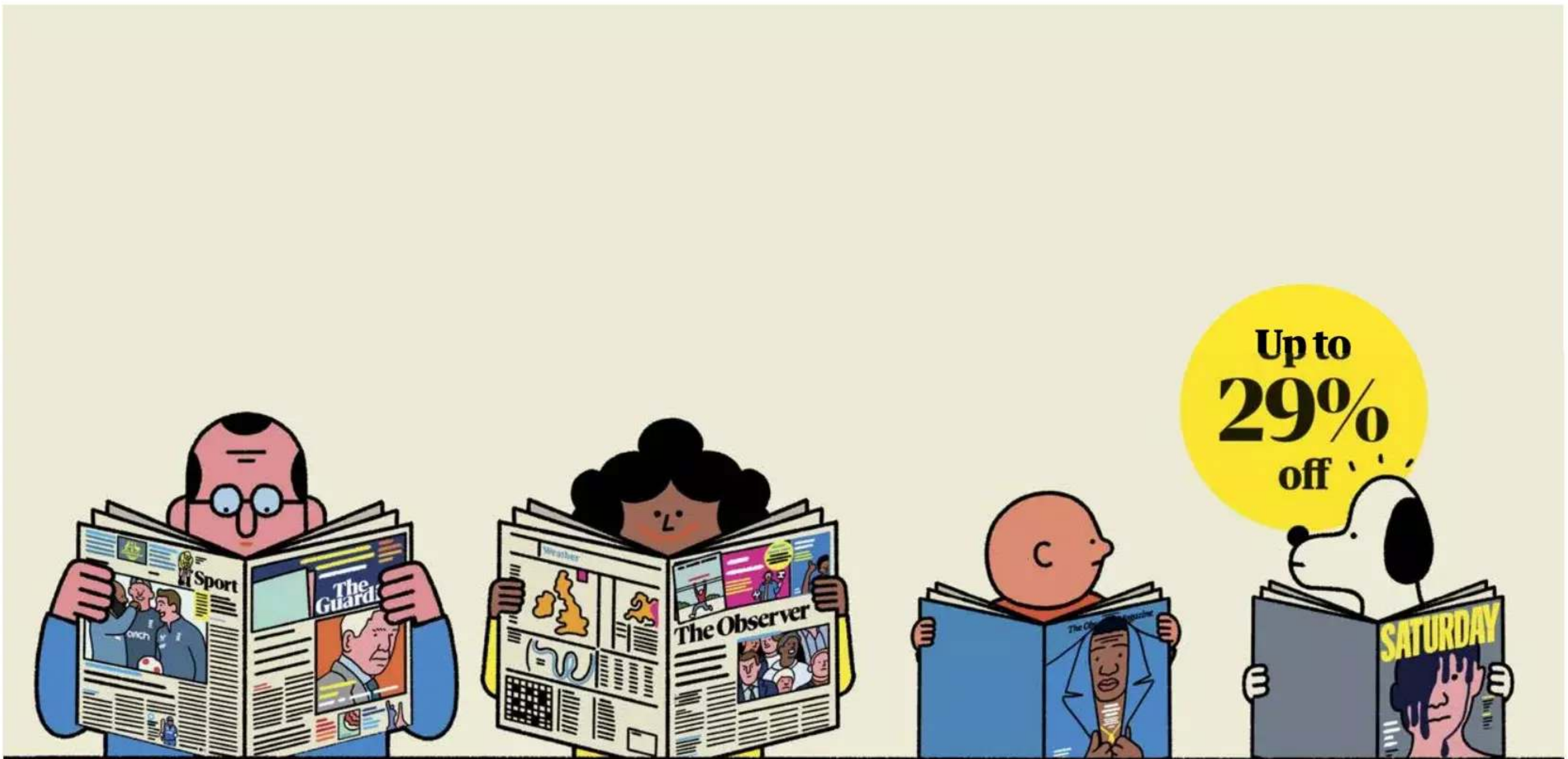
council secretary, when he visited Tehran on Monday. Israel has neither confirmed nor denied its role but is widely acknowledged to be responsible.

It is not a full reproach, since most of Iran's leadership have been aiming to hit military targets, but it underlines Russia's concern that the response to Haniyeh's killing could get out of hand - especially if members of Iran's semi-state axis of resistance, including the Houthis in Yemen and Hezbollah in Lebanon, launch military responses at the same time.

The Houthis have already hit residential buildings in Tel Aviv. The leader of Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, yesterday pledged a "strong and

effective" response to the killing of its military commander, Fuad Shukur, in Beirut by Israel last week and said it would act alone or with its regional allies. "Whatever the consequences, the resistance will not let these Israeli attacks pass by," he said in a televised address.

Western officials say the chances of Iran being persuaded to pull back from any military action are now vanishingly small, and the focus is on trying to convince Iran to avoid steps that lead to an all-out war in the region. The west argues such a war would eventually lead to Iran's isolation at the moment its new government under a reformist president is seeking improved global links.



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The Guardian | TheObserver

Clinging to power Pressure on Maduro as analysis shows election was stolen

Tiago Rogero
South America correspondent

It is not new for Nicolás Maduro to be accused of attempting to steal a presidential election – the US described his claim to have won re-election in 2018 as an “insult to democracy” – but the evidence for such allegations has never before been quite so overwhelming.

Analyses carried out by the opposition, academics and media organisations have offered strong evidence to suggest that the Venezuelan president lost – by a landslide – to the main opposition candidate, the retired diplomat Edmundo González.

A number of countries have already recognised González's victory, and even countries with leftwing governments once seen as sympathetic to Maduro (such as Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico) are demanding proof of his alleged victory – something he has promised but seems increasingly unlikely to provide.

For now at least, the incumbent clings to power, having pulled off what one expert has described as “the largest electoral fraud in Latin America's history”.

Independent observers agree that this election was never going to be fair and free. From the start, the electoral process was plagued by irregularities, according to the Venezuelan NGO Transparencia Electoral. The list ranges from blocking candidates from running – such as the opposition leader María Corina Machado, who was then replaced by González – to making it almost impossible for millions of Venezuelans living abroad to vote.

Dozens of opposition members were arrested during the campaign, and international observers were either blocked or disinvited from monitoring the vote.

On election day, some voters found polling stations had been moved without warning while in historically Chavista areas, there were reports of polling stations being kept open long after the official closing time.

After years of economic decline and a humanitarian crisis that has led to about 8 million Venezuelans emigrating, opinion polls indicated a strong lead for González.

Javier Corrales, a professor of political science at Amherst College, and the author of *Autocracy Rising: How Venezuela Transitioned to Authoritarianism*, said it seemed clear that the opposition achieved the “most impressive electoral victory in the history of Chavismo and, in fact, one of the most impressive victories in Latin America”.

But this time, the opposition



▲ Opposition leader María Corina Machado embraces presidential candidate Edmundo González at a rally last month. Venezuela's top prosecutor has announced a criminal investigation against the pair for questioning the election result

◀ A supporter of the embattled president, Nicolás Maduro, dresses as him during a march in Caracas

PHOTOGRAPHS: YURI CORTÉZ/AFP/GETTY; RONALD PENA R/EPA



◀ Opposition supporters gathering in Las Mercedes neighbourhood in Caracas on Saturday after Maduro was declared the winner of the presidential election

PHOTOGRAPH: JESÚS VARGAS/GETTY

polling stations, which showed a clear victory for González, with 67% over Maduro's 30%. Two other independent analyses, from AP and the Washington Post, reached similar conclusions.

Walter Mebane, an election forensics professor at the University of Michigan, analysed the opposition's voting tallies and concluded they were legitimate.

He also worked as an independent consultant on another study, conducted through sampling at 997 polling stations, which showed González winning 66% to 31% for Maduro.

Dalson Figueiredo, a political science professor at Brazil's Federal University of Pernambuco – and another consultant on that study – said the results show that, “given the number of votes being stolen, it's the largest electoral fraud in Latin America's history”.

Despite a legal requirement to disclose the voting tallies, Maduro has refused to do so, claiming (without evidence) that the electoral council had been targeted by hackers.

On Monday, the electoral authority claimed to have sent the tallies to the supreme court, which is also controlled by the government. “But I don't believe Maduro is going to release the data,” said Figueiredo.

That same day, González and Machado released an open letter urging the police and armed forces to abandon Maduro and “side with the people and their families”.

“We won this election without any doubt ... Now it's up to all of us to respect the voice of the people,” said the letter, which González signed as “president-elect” and Machado signed as “leader of Venezuela's democratic forces”.

In response, Venezuela's top prosecutor, Tarek William Saab, announced a criminal investigation against the pair, claiming that they “falsely announced a winner of the presidential election other than the one proclaimed by the national electoral council, the only body qualified to do so”.

The defence minister, Vladimir Padrino, yesterday reaffirmed the military's “absolute loyalty” to Maduro. Corrales said that opposition hopes that the armed forces might abandon the regime were optimistic. “Since 2020, Maduro has been turning the military – who were always pro-chavista – even more pro-chavista,” said Corrales, adding: “Any elements ... which were mildly disloyal ended up in jail, while the loyal ones were rewarded by the government with huge economic and political favours.”

Meanwhile, diplomatic pressure from countries such as the US, which have recognised González as the winner, is important – but not enough to bring about an actual change, Corrales said.

“More important is the work of governments trusted by the Venezuelan government. Will they persuade Maduro that his time is up? That's why everybody's focusing so much of their attention on whether Brazil and, to some extent, Colombia and Mexico can play a role,” he said.

had prepared itself for the fraud to come. “Everybody knew that Maduro's last resort might be to refuse to recognise the results and claim some fake numbers. So the opposition designed a system to ensure that they could have proof of how the voting went,” said Corrales.

About four hours after voting ended the government-controlled national electoral council declared victory for Maduro, eventually saying he had won almost 52% of the vote to González's 43%.

But thousands of opposition volunteers had managed to collect about 80% of the voting tallies from



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Business

Markets partly recover amid fears turmoil is not over yet

Julia Kollwe

Shares on Wall Street rose yesterday and many Asian and European markets staged a recovery after this week's global stock market rout, but analysts warned: "We might not be out of the woods."

The FTSE 100 index in London rose 18 points, or 0.2%, to close at 8,026.69, after losing 166 points, or 2%, on Monday, its biggest one-day points drop in more than a year.

Germany's Dax edged up by 0.1%, although France's Cac slipped by 0.3% after earlier rising, and the Italian bourse slid by 0.6%.

On Wall Street, the Dow Jones closed 0.8% higher, while the broader S&P 500 rose by 1.5%. The Nasdaq climbed 1%, after Wall Street's worst day in almost two years on Monday.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index closed 10.2% higher - up 3,217 to 34,675, a

record daily points rise - as investors bought into bargains after the 12.4% rout the previous day that triggered a fall in European and US markets.

The Nikkei experienced its biggest drop in 37 years on Monday. Other markets in Asia also recovered, but Hong Kong's Hang Seng was among a small number that recorded further modest losses, slipping by 0.3%.

Fawad Razaqzada, a market analyst at City Index, said: "We might not be out of the woods yet, though conditions could stabilise as the week progresses. With a quieter US economic calendar ahead, there will be fewer new recessionary signals to unsettle traders, and the potential for supportive comments from Federal Reserve officials could ease market pressure."

Markets are now expecting the Fed to cut interest rates by half a percentage point at its September meeting.

Analysts at Goldman Sachs said investors had been growing



▲ The Dow Jones edged up by 0.8% and the S&P 500 by 1.5% yesterday

increasingly complacent, interpreting "bad news as good news".

They said: "Has the correction gone far enough? At this stage probably not. Valuations have moderated but remain elevated, particularly in the US."

The week started with a global stock plunge reminiscent of 1987's Black Monday crash as fears worsened about a slowing US economy.

It was the first chance for traders in Tokyo to respond to the global

sell-off that began on Friday, after US government figures showed employers slowed their hiring last month by much more than expected, while the unemployment rate rose to 4.3%.

It was the latest piece of data on the US economy to come in weaker than expected, raising fears that the Fed had pressed the brakes on the economy by too much for too long through high interest rates, in the hope of bringing down inflation.

Fed officials tried to reassure markets on Monday. Its San Francisco president, Mary Daly, said it was "extremely important" to prevent the labour market tipping into a downturn and that she expected interest rates to be cut this year.

Investors also pointed to the Bank of Japan's decision last week to raise its main interest rate from almost zero. This helps boost the value of the Japanese yen but it could also force traders to exit deals where they borrowed money for virtually no cost in Japan and invested it in higher-yielding assets around the world. This is known as the "carry trade".

Arindam Sandilya, a co-head of global FX strategy, said on Bloomberg TV: "We are not done by any stretch. The carry trade unwind, at least within the speculative investing community, is somewhere between 50% and 60% complete."

Big lenders must do more to prepare for failure, says Bank review

Kalyeena Makortoff

The Bank of England has told big UK banks including Barclays and Standard Chartered that they need to improve their preparations for a potential failure as it pushes banks to rapidly assess their financial position to prevent social media speculation causing consumer panic.

The findings were part of the Bank's second assessment of whether banks could "safely" shut down without destabilising the financial system or immediately requiring taxpayer cash. The review - which covered Barclays, HSBC, Lloyds Banking Group, Nationwide, NatWest Group, Santander UK, Standard Chartered and Virgin Money UK - is meant to identify any shortfalls that could lead to a repeat of the 2008 financial crisis, which forced the government to spend £137bn to steady the system.

The Bank found that all lenders had proved they could safely fail without immediately requiring state intervention. However, it said it had identified some "new issues" and areas for "further enhancement", including how quickly banks are able to value their assets and liabilities.

The Bank stressed the importance of "resolution" planning after last year's mini banking crisis, which led to the failure of Credit Suisse and Silicon Valley Bank (SVB), the latter of which had its UK operations taken over in an emergency acquisition by HSBC. The mini-crisis influenced the Bank's latest review, which asked lenders to prove that they could assess their liquidity needs - covering whether they had enough funds to repay depositors looking to withdraw cash within 24 hours.

It is part of efforts to head off the risks posed by social media speculation on X and WhatsApp exchanges having fuelled bank runs, where customers withdraw cash at speed, at Credit Suisse and SVB. Some experts have said that social media has turned already worrisome bank runs into concerning "bank sprints".

"Firms should be able to update and revise rapidly the key input assumptions of valuation models," the Bank said in its report yesterday. The Bank also identified a number of areas for "further enhancement".

£137bn

The amount that the UK government was forced to spend to steady the system after the 2008 financial crash

Domino's Pizza promises lower price deals for customers as food costs fall

Julia Kollwe

Domino's Pizza Group has become the latest fast-food company to promise cheaper prices through more promotions, saying it would pass on falling costs to customers in the coming months via local deals.

The chain made the announcement as it downgraded its full-year profit outlook after lacklustre orders in the first half of the year, despite receiving a lift from the Euro 2024 football tournament.

With food costs falling, the company said it would share more of these lower costs in the second half of the year with franchise partners. A spokesperson said the company expected franchisees to pass on these savings to customers, as they set the menu price and could offer deals in their area.

Domino's also runs national promotions, such as a £4 lunch deal. Andrew Rennie, the chief executive, said sales made at lunchtime only made up 10-15% of Domino's business but the company hoped to increase this.



▲ Domino's received a boost from Euro 2024, selling 20 pizzas a second during England's games

PHOTOGRAPH: MARK WAUGH/THE GUARDIAN

There has been a sharp rise in promotions at fast-food groups in response to intense competition and the cost of living crisis, with McDonald's and the bakery chain Greggs offering low-price breakfasts and KFC and Domino's trying to lure customers with lunch deals.

Domino's stores in the UK and Ireland are run by 65 franchisees, which

vary in size; some operate hundreds of outlets while others have just one.

The company said orders fell by 0.9% to £35.1m in the six months to 30 June, while revenues were down by 1.8% to £326.8m. Statutory profit before tax dropped by 35% to £59.4m. As a result, Domino's expects underlying earnings before interest, which totalled £69m in the first half, to be at the lower end of analysts' forecasts of between £144m and £149m.

Domino's said it received a boost from Euro 2024 between mid-June and mid-July. It sold 20 pizzas a

second during England's games, up to the final when the team lost to Spain. In July, orders rose by 5.8%.

Rennie said: "Following a slow start to the year, we now have good momentum in the business with our strategic initiatives gaining traction and our trading performance accelerating steadily against strong comparatives from last year."

He told investors that when the company turns 40 years next year, it will have almost 1,400 stores, and is aiming to increase that to 2,000 in the next three to five years.

Business view
Nils Pratley



Thames Water's woes flow from old-fashioned operational failings, not dividend extraction

What does Thames Water's latest disgrace - top billing in a multi-year, multi-company sewage scandal, as finally detailed by the regulator, Ofwat, yesterday - mean for its great refinancing challenge? At one level, one could say it makes little difference. A £104m penalty is close to the maximum under Ofwat's powers, but is a rounding error in the context of borrowings of £15.2bn in the regulated entity. Since the board has known what was coming for months, one assumes the sum was included in last month's calculation that there is enough cash to keeping going until next

May. In any case, a separate potential criminal investigation by the Environment Agency for the same sewage failings is probably the bigger financial threat. But, viewed a different way, the detail of the report underlines the scale of pure operational improvements required at Thames. About 67% of its wastewater treatment works with "flow to full treatment" permits were found to have "capacity and operational issues", which is an astonishingly high ratio. At the other miscreants, Yorkshire Water and Northumbrian Water, the figures were 16% and 3%. Thames wasn't the worst of the trio for breaches related to storm overflows, meaning the emergency relief points that stop the sewage network being overwhelmed

during usually heavy downpours. Its 16% noncompliance level was better than Yorkshire's appalling 45%. But there is a reason why Thames was fined (subject to appeal and consultation) a sum equivalent to 9% of turnover in its wastewater division, versus 7% for Yorkshire and 5% for Northumbrian: it was the worst offender in aggregate, albeit the rest of the industry is still to have its turn in the spotlight. It is yet another reminder that the direct source of Thames's woes isn't the financial engineering and dividend-extraction over the years, appalling though that has been. It is old-fashioned operational failings. Thames has failed to keep pace with the effects of population growth and climate change and is running a water and sewage network that the company itself describes as the oldest set of assets in the industry. The tally of water treatment works deemed "potentially noncompliant" by Ofwat is an astonishing 157. The refinancing script still imagines new investors can be found to replace the current owners who declared the company "uninvestable". In reality, the task of raising £3bn-plus looks virtually impossible without a debt writedown to clear the decks. Given the state of the assets,



Thames has described its network as the industry's oldest set of assets

The refinancing script imagines new investors can be found. In reality, raising £3bn-plus looks impossible without a debt writedown

which sounds worse with every glimpse we get, any new investors would surely want to maximise the hit for bondholders before putting in fresh capital. At the moment, though, there is no sign of bondholders volunteering to shoulder losses of, say, £5bn-odd. If that remains the case, a spell in special administration, aka temporary nationalisation, looks the most viable alternative as a way to impose the necessary losses on them. The advantage of an administration process is that a government-appointed outsider would determine a capital structure to allow financial headroom for catchup spending. If the path could simultaneously be set for an eventual return to the stock market, so much the better. One of the restructuring outcomes has to be chosen within months because the financial farce cannot run indefinitely. In the meantime, be scandalised that it took so long for the regulators to catch up with the scale of the spills. The breakthrough came only when water firms were forced to install monitors to measure flows, which began to happen from about 2015, while the appalling evidence only emerged in 2021. It is very hard to believe the water industry did not know there was a huge problem before then.

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UK economic recovery 'will accelerate and force Bank to keep rates higher for longer'

Phillip Inman

The UK's economic recovery will accelerate over the next year, forcing the Bank of England to keep interest rates higher for longer, according to a leading economic thinktank.

Suggesting bets on further rate cuts this year could be misplaced, the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) said a modest economic recovery and the threat of persistent inflationary trends should make the central bank more cautious about reducing the cost of borrowing.

NIESR said its forecasts showed interest rates would edge down slowly over the next year from 5% to 4.6% in 2025 and to 4.1% in 2026 before reaching 3.1% in 2028 – well above the 0.75% set by the Bank in 2019 before the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mortgages and business loans would carry a higher cost, forcing many homeowners to pay higher monthly interest bills and companies to go bankrupt, leading to a rise in unemployment, it forecast.

NIESR said a lack of business investment and expected productivity growth would make the UK's growth fall to 1.2% for the rest of the forecast period from 2026 to 2029.

Officials at the Bank cut interest rates from 5.25% to 5% earlier this month. They expect the UK's growth rate to be lower than the forecast by NIESR, putting the Bank on course to cut rates at least once more this year and steadily in 2025.

The chancellor, Rachel Reeves, has pledged to increase the UK's growth rate to 2.5%. Jagjit Chadha, the NIESR director, said Reeves needed to increase growth without adding to inflation, which meant increasing long-term public investment

► Higher costs for business loans could make some traders bankrupt, leading to a rise in unemployment

PHOTOGRAPH: MIKE KEMP/IN PICTURES/GETTY

in education, health, transport and energy. He said the "dogma" of budget rules was preventing the Treasury from sanctioning investments that cost billions of pounds in upfront costs but grow the national income (GDP) over the long term.

Referring to the recent riots in England and Northern Ireland, Chadha said raising incomes for those earning the least in society was the "best way" to raise GDP. He said that would require increased public sector spending, improved productivity and "a great deal of patience on behalf of an increasingly fractious population".

Adding to the growing calls from economic thinktanks for the chancellor to increase investment spending in her budget, NIESR said Reeves should be "brave" and rewrite budget

rules that tie day-to-day spending with long-term public investments.

Reeves has promised to maintain two rules in the budget on 1 October. The first forces the government to reduce debt as a proportion of national income in the fifth year of a five-year forecast. The UK's

3.1%

Where the Bank of England's interest rate will reach by 2028, according to a forecast by NIESR

0.75%

The base rate before the start of the pandemic. NIESR predicts such rates will be consigned to history



UK construction sector growing at fastest pace in over two years

Larry Elliott

Economics editor

Growth in the UK construction sector hit its highest level in more than two years last month amid optimism that Labour's shake-up of planning laws would boost activity.

In the latest sign that the economy is emerging from last year's recession, the monthly health check from S&P Global Market Intelligence showed all three parts of the sector – commercial

property, housing and infrastructure – expanding strongly.

Andrew Harker, the economics director at S&P Global Market Intelligence, said: "The election-related slowdown in growth seen in June proved to be temporary, with the pace of expansion roaring ahead in July. Firms saw the strongest increases in new orders and activity since 2022 as paused projects were released amid reports of improved customer confidence."

S&P said its purchasing managers'

index (PMI) – a seasonally adjusted measure of activity in construction – rose from 52.2 in June to 55.3 in July, its highest level since May 2022. Any reading above 50 indicates the sector is growing rather than contracting.

Jordan Smith, the technical director at property consultancy Thomas & Adamson, said: "The growth in construction activity is beginning to pick up pace again, with genuine optimism that the new government's plans will act as a further catalyst for the sector as a whole."

S&P said success in securing new orders was the main factor leading to a rise in activity at the start of the third quarter. New business expanded for the sixth successive month.

Kelly Boorman, the national head

of construction at the audit, tax and consulting firm RSM UK, welcomed July's rise in headline construction PMI as showing the industry continuing its recovery. "This reflects positive sentiment in response to the government's focus on local housing targets with greater transparency towards planning and infrastructure," she said.

Harker said the activity was causing prices to rise. "The strength of demand moved the sector closer to capacity, bringing a recent period of improving supplier performance to an end," he added. "There were also signs of inflationary pressures picking up, something that will need to be watched closely if demand strength continues in the months ahead."

debt-to-GDP ratio is 97%. The second rule forces the Treasury to limit its spending deficit to 3% in the final year of the forecast.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies, a tax and spending thinktank, said changing the way debt is measured would allow the government to borrow billions more but would not change the "fiscal reality".

Ben Zaranko, a senior research economist at the IFS, said a change to the debt rules could be an "attractive" option for Reeves, who has accused the previous government of leaving £22bn of unfunded commitments. Reeves has said public sector pay awards costing £9.4bn and a £6.4bn bill for housing asylum seekers were among costs she inherited when taking office.

But the thinktank said technical changes to definitions would not change the "fiscal reality".

Global factors could be decisive in determining how quickly the UK grows. NIESR said there were risks from a potential US recession and conflict in the Middle East to the outlook for global growth, though most countries were expected to continue to recover from the pandemic and the cost of living crisis. Global economic growth is expected to slow from 4% to 3% over the next year, it said.

Saudi Aramco dividends set for record high despite profits weakening

Jillian Ambrose

Saudi Arabia's state-owned oil company is on track to grow its dividends by 30% this year to a new high of \$124bn (£98bn) despite reporting weaker profits in the past quarter.

The world's biggest oil company will pay its shareholders, including the Saudi government, a quarterly dividend of \$31bn, which puts the company on course to achieve the record annual sum.

The payouts are a crucial source of income for the Saudi government – which controls more than 81% of the company – as it undertakes a multi-trillion-dollar economic overhaul.

Aramco's record-breaking dividends, the highest since a portion of the company was listed on the Saudi stock exchange in late 2019, were set out alongside financial results that showed its net income for the three months to the end of June fell to \$29bn, down from \$30bn in the same period a year earlier.

Aramco's profits were dented over the second quarter after the company sold less crude and reported weaker margins from its refinery business. The company limited its oil production to an average of 9m barrels of oil a day as it led efforts by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries to shore up global prices.

The curbs on Aramco's oil production have caused the company's share price to tumble by 19% this year, underperforming global oil groups such as Exxon Mobil and Shell that have kept their focus on returning cash to shareholders with growing dividends and share buybacks.

Oil prices have tumbled this year amid concern over global economic growth, which is expected to pile pressure on the Saudi government's finances. The kingdom requires oil market prices of more than \$96 a barrel to meet its spending plans, according to the International Monetary Fund, well above the prevailing benchmark price of \$76 a barrel.

The government sold a fresh stake in Aramco earlier this year, raising \$12.35bn. It has also raised \$17bn from eurobond sales.

Global oil markets have slumped by 6% to the lowest levels since January due to shaky Chinese demand and fears of a US recession.



▲ The Saudi Arabian state-owned firm had a \$31bn quarterly dividend

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Sunny

Mist

Fog

Sunny intervals

Hazy

Mostly cloudy

Overcast/dull

Sunny showers

Sunny and heavy showers

Light showers

Rain

Sleet

Light snow

Snow showers

Heavy snow

Ice

Thundery rain

Thundery showers

Temperature, °C

Wind speed, mph

Windy

35C

30

25

20

15

10

5

0

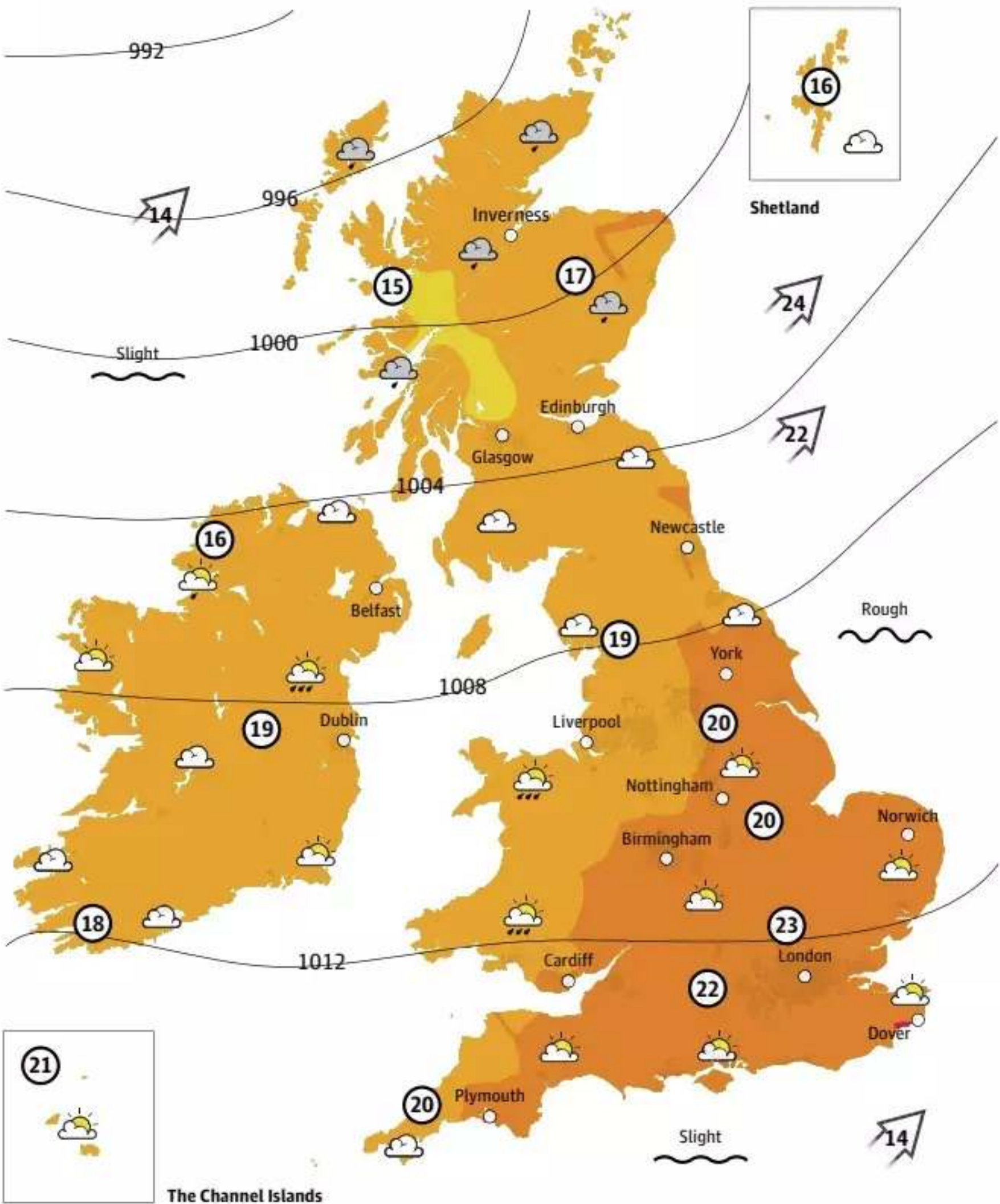
-5

-10

-15

-20

°C



Forecast



Carbon count

Daily atmospheric CO₂ readings from Mauna Loa, Hawaii (ppm):

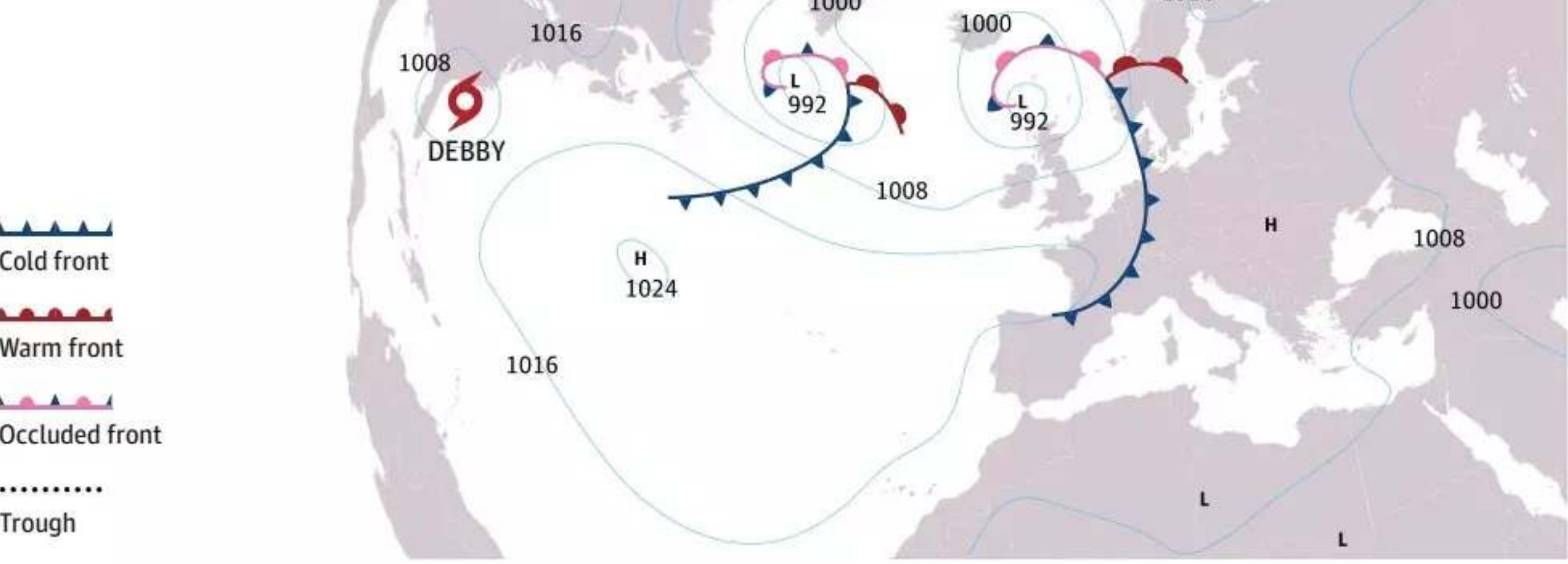
Latest	424.57
05 Aug 2024	424.57
Weekly average	
28 Jul 2024	424.88
06 Aug 2023	420.83
06 Aug 2014	397.65
Pre-industrial base	280
Safe level	350

Source: NOAA-ESRL

Around the UK

London	Lows and highs	Precipitation	Air pollution	
13	23	10%	Low	
Manchester	13	20	25%	Low
Edinburgh	12	19	60%	Low
Belfast	11	18	60%	Low
Birmingham	12	21	10%	Low
Brighton	14	21	10%	Low
Bristol	14	20	50%	Low
Cardiff	15	19	60%	Low
Newcastle	11	19	25%	Low
Penzance	16	19	60%	Low

Atlantic front



High tides

Aberdeen	0346	4.2m	1618	3.9m
Avonmouth	1003	12.2m	2213	12.4m
Barrow	0148	8.8m	1412	8.5m
Belfast	0135	3.5m	1400	3.0m
Cobh	0803	3.8m	2021	3.9m
Cromer	0856	5.0m	2135	4.6m
Dover	0143	6.3m	1356	6.5m
Dublin	0147	4.0m	1414	3.6m
Galway	0756	4.8m	2005	4.9m
Greenock	0247	3.5m	1534	3.0m
Harwich	0223	3.8m	1432	3.8m
Holyhead	0042	5.5m	1304	5.1m
Hull	0850	7.3m	2119	6.8m
Leith	0510	5.3m	1731	5.2m
Liverpool	0130	9.0m	1350	8.7m
London Bridge	0435	6.8m	1646	6.7m
Lossiemouth	0217	4.0m	1446	3.7m
Milford Haven	0854	6.5m	2108	6.7m
Newquay	0745	6.5m	1959	6.7m
North Shields	0552	5.0m	1822	4.7m
Oban	0827	3.7m	2032	3.9m
Penzance	0717	5.1m	1932	5.3m
Plymouth	0829	5.0m	2034	5.3m
Portsmouth	0147	4.4m	1424	4.5m
Southport	0104	8.7m	1324	8.4m
Stornoway	0928	4.3m	2130	4.6m
Weymouth	0839	1.0m	2046	1.3m
Whitby	0629	5.5m	1857	5.1m
Wick	0143	3.4m	1411	3.1m
Workington	0152	8.0m	1415	7.7m

Sun & Moon

Sun rises 0533
Sun sets 2037
Moon rises 0836
Moon sets 2149
First Quarter 12 Aug

AccuWeather.com
Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather ©2024

Lighting up

Belfast	2113 to 0549
Birm'ham	2047 to 0539
Brighton	2035 to 0538
Bristol	2047 to 0547
Carlisle	2101 to 0534
Cork	2112 to 0608
Dublin	2109 to 0554
Glasgow	2111 to 0537
Harlech	2058 to 0547
Inverness	2117 to 0528
London	2037 to 0535
M'chester	2053 to 0538
Newcastle	2057 to 0529
Norwich	2036 to 0526
Penzance	2055 to 0602

Specieswatch

If you have seen a sand eel, it is probably in a picture on a wildlife calendar, hanging out of the beak of a puffin on the way to feed its young. Almost certainly you would have eaten some indirectly, either in the form of fish oil or because you have dined on farmed salmon.

Raitt's sand eel, *Ammodytes marinus*, is the most common of a number of species of sand eels that live round the coasts of Britain and has been so ruthlessly commercially fished it has become threatened. They bury themselves in the sand in winter but emerge in spring and summer to breed and become a vital part of the marine food chain. Normally, sand eels live in shoals of many thousands and are food for many seabirds and larger fish. Annual catches close to 500,000 tonnes have wiped out stocks and as numbers plunged, some seabird colonies have starved.

It has taken three decades of campaigning by a variety of scientists and environmental groups to finally get a ban on commercial sand eel fishing in the English and Scottish waters of the North Sea. The EU is contesting the ban but, meanwhile, stocks and seabird colonies could recover.

Paul Brown

Around the world

Algiers	37	Lisbon	28
Ams'dam	22	Madrid	39
Athens	33	Malaga	31
Auckland	15	Melb'rme	17
B Aires	15	Mexico C	23
Bangkok	33	Miami	34
Barcelona	31	Milan	31
Basra	47	Mombasa	27
Beijing	31	Moscow	22
Berlin	30	Mumbai	30
Bermuda	31	N Orleans	37
Brussels	23	Nairobi	25
Budapest	30	New Delhi	28
C'hagen	24	New York	21
Cairo	36	Oslo	23
Cape Town	17	Paris	26
Chicago	25	Perth	19
Corfu	35	Prague	29
Dakar	30	Reykjavik	16
Dhaka	31	Rio de J	28
Dublin	18	Rome	32
Florence	36	Shanghai	37
Gibraltar	30	Singapore	31
H Kong	33	Stockh'm	23
Harare	26	Strasb'g	27
Helsinki	22	Sydney	18
Istanbul	30	Tel Aviv	32
Jo'burg	20	Tenerife	26
K Lumpur	31	Tokyo	32
K'mandu	27	Toronto	24
Kabul	34	Vancouv'r	24
Kingston	33	Vienna	30
Kolkata	30	Warsaw	26
L Angeles	31	Wash'ton	31
Lagos	29	Well'ton	14
Lima	17	Zurich	26

Paris 2024


Today

Highlights

9.15am Amusan in action

 Nigeria's world record holder Tobi Amusan is set to be involved in the first round of the women's 100m hurdles, having been cleared to compete by the court of arbitration for sport two months ago following a dispute over an alleged missed doping test. Britain's Cindy Sember, who won bronze at the Commonwealth Games two years ago, will also be involved. Ben Pattison goes in the first round of the men's 800m.

11.30am How do you do, fellow kids?

 Skateboarding is not just for the strikingly young. Andy Macdonald competes for Britain at age 51, making him the oldest athlete in Olympic skateboarding's short history. He has a child older than his teammates Sky Brown and Lola Tambling.

6.30pm Not May's day, but still ...

 In 2022 World Aquatics changed its rules to allow men to compete in artistic swimming at the Olympics, and it looked like the American Bill May was going to be the one to make history. In February he was in the USA team that won world championship bronze. "They're going to see a male in the Olympics, and it's going to inspire them, anyone that has a dream," he said. In June he was left out of the USA squad. There will be no men in the artistic swimming this year. It'll still be amazing, in its odd way.



▲ Vita Heathcote and Chris Grube are waiting on the wind in Marseille

8.20pm Hudson-Smith goes for gold

 Team GB did not manage to have a single runner in the 400m field three years ago - now they have Matthew Hudson-Smith. The 29-year-old from Wolverhampton has had to deal with a series of injuries as well as issues regarding his mental health to be one of the best in the world over the distance. He will fancy his chances in the final, with his strongest rivals for a medal including the American Quincy Hall and Grenada's Kirani James.

8.30pm The eye of the storm

 In boxing, all eyes will inevitably be on the first women's 57kg semi-final with Lin Yu-ting facing Turkey's Esra Yildiz Kahraman. After that there are two gold medal bouts. The men's 63.5kg final features the home hope Sofiane Oumiha - a silver medallist at Rio 2016 - facing Erislandy Álvarez from Cuba, the island of amateur boxing royalty. Then the battle for the men's 80kg gold medal takes place between Ukraine's Oleksandr Khyzhniak and Nurbek Oralbay from Kazakhstan.

TBC Sail away

 Welcome to the sailing mixed dinghy medal race, in which Britain's odd couple Vita Heathcote and Chris Grube - she is 23 and going into her first Games, he is 39 and has been tempted out of retirement for one last go - have a chance of medals after coming second at the world championships in Mallorca this year, despite illness, injury and having worked together only for a matter of months. Spain's Jordi Xammar and Nora Brugman, who won that event in Mallorca, are the key rivals. Start time will depend on the conditions at Marseille Marina.

Today's TV
Live
Discovery+ All events live
BBC One 8am-1pm, 1.45-6pm, 7-10pm
BBC Two 1-1.45pm, 6-7pm
BBC 7.45am-11pm
Eurosport 1 8am-9pm
Eurosport 2 8.45am-10.30pm

Highlights
BBC One 10.40pm
Eurosport 1 9pm

Matt Hudson-Smith ran 44.07sec in his 400m semi-final win

Weather 26° 

Schedule Day 12

Sport	Session	Time and details
Artistic swimming	Team	18:30 Aerobic routine
Athletics	Mixed race walk relay Men's high jump Women's 100m hurdles Women's javelin Men's 5,000m Men's 800m Women's 1500m Women's pole vault Men's 110m hurdles Men's triple jump Men's 400m hurdles Men's 200m Men's discus Women's 400m Men's 400m Men's steeplechase	06:30 Final 09:05 Qualification 09:15 Round 1 09:25, 10:50 Qualification 10:10 Round 1 10:55 Round 1 11:45 Repechage 18:00 Final 18:05 Semi-final 18:15 Qualification 18:35 Semi-final 19:02 Semi-final 19:25 Final 19:45 Semi-final 20:20 Final 20:40 Final
Basketball	Women's	10:00, 13:30, 17:00, 20:30 Quarter-finals
Beach volleyball	Women's Men's	Quarter-finals 16:00, Spain v Canada 17:00 Brazil v Lithuania Quarter-finals 20:00, 21:00 Spain v Norway 21:00 Qatar v USA
Boxing	Women's 57kg Men's +92kg Men's 63.5kg Men's 80kg	20:30, 20:46 Semi-finals 21:02, 21:18 Semi-finals 21:34 Final 21:51 Final
Canoe sprint	Women's K1 500m Men's K1 1,000m Men's C1 1,000m	08:30 Heats 12:30 Quarter-finals 09:40 Heats 13:10 Quarter-finals 10:40 Heats 13:40 Quarter-finals
Cycling (track)	Men's sprint Women's keirin Women's team pursuit Men's team pursuit	11:45 Qualifying 13:30 Round of 32 14:30 Repechage 16:30 Round of 16 17:42 Repechage 18:38 Quarter-finals 19:14 Repechage 12:26 Round 1 14:10 Repechage 12:52 Round 1 17:57 Gold race 17:04 Placing 7-8 17:10 Placing 5-6 17:25 Bronze race 17:33 Gold race Watch out for the deryn in today's keirin
Diving	Men's 3m Women's 3m	09:00 Semi-final 14:00 Preliminaries
Golf	Women's	08:00 Round 1
Handball	Men's	Quarter-finals 08:30 Spain v Egypt 12:30 Germany v France 16:30 Denmark v Sweden 20:30 Norway v Slovenia
Hockey	Women's	Semi-finals 13:00 Netherlands v Argentina 18:00 Belgium v China
Sailing	Men's kite Women's kite Mixed dinghy Mixed multihull	TBC Races 13-16 TBC Races 13-16 TBC Medal race TBC Medal race
Skateboarding	Men's park	11:30 Preliminaries 16:30 Final
Sport climbing	Men's boulder & lead Women's speed	09:00 Semi-final (lead) 11:28 Quarter-finals 11:46 Semi-finals 11:55 Final
Table tennis	Men's team Women's team	09:00, 14:00 Quarter-finals 19:00 Semi-finals 09:00, 14:00 Quarter-finals
Taekwondo	Women's -49kg Men's -58kg	08:00 Round of 16 13:30 Quarter-finals 15:11 Semi-finals 18:30 Repechage 19:19, 19:51 Bronze bouts 20:23 Gold bout 08:10 Round of 16 13:40 Quarter-finals 15:24 Semi-finals 18:40 Repechage 19:35, 20:07 Bronze bouts 20:39 Gold bout
Volleyball	Men's	Semi-finals 15:00 Poland v USA 19:00 Italy v France
Water polo	Men's	Quarter-finals 13:00 Croatia v Spain 14:35 Greece v Serbia 18:00 Belgium v China 19:35 Italy v Hungary
Wrestling	Men's g/r 77kg Men's g/r 97kg Women's f/s 50kg Men's g/r 67kg Men's g/r 87kg Women's f/s 53kg	10:00 Repechage 18:30 Bronze bout 18:55 Gold bout 10:00 Repechage 19:05 Bronze bout 19:30 Gold bout 10:00 Repechage 19:50 Bronze bout 20:15 Gold bout 10:30 Round of 16 11:50 Quarter-finals 17:15 Semi-finals 10:30 Round of 16 11:50 Quarter-finals 17:35 Semi-finals 10:30 Round of 16 11:50 Quarter-finals 17:55 Semi-finals

 **Olympics live**
Follow the action with us
theguardian.com/sport

Sport



In brief


Football Hayes' USA side to take on Brazil in final

 Sophia Smith scored an extra-time winner as Emma Hayes's USA side reached the Olympic women's final with a 1-0 win against Germany in Lyon last night. Smith scored five minutes into extra time, chipping the onrushing Germany keeper Ann-Katrin Berger after a through ball from Mallory Swanson. Later Brazil stunned world champions Spain 4-2 in Marseille to set up a final against USA at Parc des Princes on Saturday. **Reuters**

Surfing Vaast and Marks claim gold medals in Tahiti

 The Tahitian Kauli Vaast surfed a near-perfect final to claim gold for France in men's contest at Teahupo'o. Caroline Marks of the USA claimed gold in the women's final after a tight victory against Brazil's Tatiana Weston-Webb, with Johanne Defay finishing third. Australia's Jack Robinson won silver in the men's surfing with Brazil's Gabriel Medina taking bronze. The 22-year-old Vaast said: "I just made history - for me, for all Tahitians, for Polynesia and France." **Reuters**

Golf Cigarette ban is a drag for Hull's medal hopes

 Images of Charley Hull with a cigarette dangling from her mouth went viral during the US Open this year, but there will be no repeat today at Le Golf National as the women's Olympic golf event tees off. "I do smoke on the course," Hull said yesterday. "It's a habit but I won't do this week. I don't think you're allowed." Hull is correct: Paris 2024 organisers have stipulated that all Olympic venues are non-smoking - and Hull is not totally happy at the rule. When asked whether the ban will affect her, she said: "I think it will, because it relaxes me a little bit. But it is what it is." Georgia Hall joins Hull under the Team GB banner. Nelly Korda, who won gold in Tokyo, is the hot favourite for the event. **Ewan Murray**

Sport
FootballCity agree sale
of Álvarez
to Atlético
in record deal

Will Unwin

Manchester City have agreed a deal worth up to €95m (£81.5m) with Atlético Madrid for the striker Julián Álvarez, a record sale for the club. The Premier League champions are due to receive an initial €75m that could rise based on numerous clauses, as the Spanish side work to settle personal terms with the Argentinian.

The World Cup winner is eager to be a more significant player because, despite making 54 appearances and scoring 19 goals last season for City, he was seen as Erling Haaland's understudy and rarely got to start in his preferred No 9 role when the Norwegian was fit.

It could be a busy few days for Atlético, who have agreed a £33m fee with Chelsea for Conor Gallagher. Álvarez would become the second striker in this window to join Atlético, who have also bought Alexander Sørloth from Villarreal. They have also brought in the defender Robin Le Normand from Real Sociedad.

City are in line to make a healthy

profit on the 24-year-old Álvarez, who joined in 2022 from River Plate for an initial £14m.

Since then he has won every major competition he could in world football, including the Premier League, Champions League, Copa América and World Cup.

City's previous record sale was the £55m earned from the departure of Ferran Torres for Barcelona and Pep Guardiola has said they would seek signings only if someone leaves. Considering the number of minutes Álvarez played last season, it is likely City will enter the market. Their only senior signing this summer is the forward Savinho from Troyes.

Álvarez is resting after a busy summer during which he won the Copa América before helping Argentina reach the quarter-finals of the Olympics, where they lost to France.

City face Manchester United in the Community Shield on Saturday before starting their Premier League campaign at Chelsea.



Julián Álvarez is poised to leave the Premier League champions

Newcastle
hopeful of
sealing £60m
move for Guéhi

Louise Taylor

Newcastle are cautiously optimistic Marc Guéhi will start the season as a key component of their squad. Negotiations with Crystal Palace over the England defender's proposed £60m-plus move are believed to be progressing well and, crucially, Guéhi has indicated he is extremely keen on relocating to St James' Park.

The 24-year-old is due to rejoin Palace's first-team squad for pre-season training today after his exertions with England at the European Championship in Germany but could soon be rerouted to Newcastle. Although an agreement is still to be reached



Marc Guéhi was among England's best players at the Euro 2024 finals

with Palace and until certain details are finalised the move remains in danger of being hijacked, Newcastle are in touching distance of completing a marquee signing.

Guéhi was one of England's best performers at Euro 2024 and is regarded as an ideal long-term partner for Sven Botman by Newcastle. With Botman recovering from an anterior cruciate ligament repair, recruiting a central defender has been a priority for Newcastle and they hope a deal for Guéhi could be completed this weekend.

Although Palace rejected Newcastle's opening bid last week, it seems they are minded to cash in on a player with two years remaining on his contract and an apparent desire to leave.

A move north-east when Guéhi has attracted a number of admirers, Liverpool included, would represent quite a coup for Paul Mitchell, Newcastle's new sporting director. It would also reassure Eddie Howe of the club's ambition at a time when he looms large on the Football Association's shortlist to replace Gareth Southgate as England manager.

West Ham have signed the defensive midfielder Guido Rodríguez on a free after his departure from Real Betis. He was part of the Argentina squads that won the World Cup in 2022, and the 2021 and 2024 Copa América titles.

The 30-year-old's arrival was described by West Ham's technical director, Tim Steidten, as "a big statement of intent".

Norwich City have signed the **Manchester City** defender Callum Doyle on a season's loan. The 20-year-old has had loans with Sunderland, Coventry and Leicester.

Analysis
Andy HunterLiverpool yet to strike
right chord in pursuit
of transfer crescendo

Richard Hughes remains on track with a prediction of how his first transfer window will unfold as Liverpool's sporting director. "A quiet July, then a crescendo in August probably awaits us all," the former Bournemouth technical director said just over a month ago. The crescendo is yet to begin but there are understandable reasons why Liverpool have not made a sound in the transfer market so far.

Liverpool are the only Premier League club not to have made a signing this summer, but that is soon expected to change now that Arne Slot has had an in-depth look at the squad during a tour of the US.

The tour was a success, Liverpool beating Real Betis 1-0, Arsenal 2-1 and Manchester United 3-0, with the implementation of the new head coach's style more important than positive results. But it did underline the need for a defensive midfielder, a long-term priority for Liverpool, and moves are under way to strengthen in that role. That was the one aspect of the midfield rebuild that stalled last summer, with Jürgen Klopp turning to a then 30-year-old Wataru Endo late in the window after losing out on Moisés Caicedo and Roméo Lavia to Chelsea.

Endo started the opening game of the US tour alongside Curtis Jones but struggled with Slot's more possession-based approach. Slot started Dominik Szoboszlai and Ryan Gravenberch alongside Jones in the remaining two matches, and introduced the impressive teenager Trey Nyoni before Endo when making the usual wholesale pre-season changes. Liverpool have rejected a bid of £11.8m from Marseille for the Japan international, who cost £16m 12 months ago, but that stance reflects the options at Slot's disposal and could change in the event of landing another midfielder. And receiving a better offer.

Liverpool never anticipated a busy summer, at least in terms of incomings, for several reasons. Aside from a defensive midfielder there is a belief that there are no glaring holes to fill in a team that remain in the early stages of development and capable of improving on the club's third-place finish last season. The chance to sign Anthony Gordon from Newcastle interested Liverpool

when he was offered in June but, with Luis Díaz, Cody Gakpo and Darwin Núñez able to play on the left – though Slot sees Núñez as an out-and-out centre-forward – talks never seriously advanced. A move for Gordon has not been revisited.

Liverpool were also keen on Leny Yoro, because of the teenager's outstanding talent rather than an urgent need to strengthen in central defence, only for Manchester United to blow them and Real Madrid away with a deal worth €62m plus €8m in add-ons to Lille.

There is the complication of a head coach starting in a summer when the European Championship, Copa América and Olympics have been taking place. That, however, has not prevented the four other Premier League clubs under new management from strengthening. But Slot, as mentioned, wanted to assess the players in the US before having his say on Liverpool's next moves, in and out.

The head coach is also just one part of a new football structure that Liverpool's owner, Fenway Sports Group, put in place after receiving notice of Klopp's intention to go. Michael Edwards, back as FSG's chief executive of football, the former sporting director Julian Ward, back as FSG's technical director, Pedro Marques, hired from

Slot wanted to assess the players in the US before having his say on the club's next moves, in and out

Benfica as director of football development, Hughes and his assistant, David Woodfine, shape the post-Klopp era.

High on their agenda are the futures of Mohamed Salah, Virgil van Dijk and Trent Alexander-Arnold, three of the club's most important players and biggest assets who have entered the final year of their contracts. Liverpool find themselves in a precarious position, unusually for them. Each player will be expensive to keep – Salah and Van Dijk are already the two highest earners – but hugely damaging to lose.

Slot seemed extremely relaxed on the tour about the lack of new faces and, like Klopp when he first arrived at Liverpool, bemused by what he perceives as a British obsession with transfers. "The bar is really high for new signings because we have so many good players," he said after the United game. "It is not so easy to first find a player to meet those standards and then is he available? Then we have to find an agreement with them, so it is not always easy to find a player who can help us but Richard is working hard on it."

With 12 days to go before the Premier League opener at Ipswich, Liverpool will play two friendlies on Sunday in an attempt to bolster match fitness. The Anfield fixture against Sevilla will be followed by a behind-closed-doors game against Las Palmas.

Liverpool have received inquiries for several fringe players. Southampton and Leicester want Fábio Carvalho, who impressed in the US. Liverpool have rejected two approaches from Southampton for the 21-year-old, the latest at £15m, and Slot believes Carvalho is well suited to his system as a No 10 or out wide. It will take a significantly improved offer to test Liverpool's resolve.

Salzburg, managed by the former Liverpool assistant manager Pepijn Lijnders, are interested, with Norwich and Leeds, in the midfielder Bobby Clark, while the defender Sepp van den Berg and the winger Ben Doak have numerous suitors. Liverpool fans, however, await the first signing of the Slot era and that anticipated crescendo.



◀ Arne Slot says 'the bar is really high' for Liverpool to sign new players because of the strength of the squad
ANDREW POWELL/
LIVERPOOL FC/
GETTY IMAGES

Boxing

Khelif wins again on wild night at Roland Garros

Barney Ronay
Roland Garros

Imane Khelif's extraordinary Olympic Games still has one round left to run. At a wild, steamy Roland Garros, Algeria's fifth seed beat Janjaem Suwannapheng of Thailand to win the women's 66kg semi-final bout and set up a final against Yang Liu of China on Friday.

This was a startling event, in large part because of its exuberantly Algerian tone. The snaking queue outside Roland Garros in the hours before this evening round of Olympic boxing had been heavily stacked with Algerian flags and football shirts. Centre court, reconfigured into a breathtaking boxing area, was similarly decked with the red and green.

This has been one effect of the controversy around Khelif. The Algerian diaspora in Paris has come out to support her, a reflection of the way the events of the past two weeks have been received back home.

It has been another extraordinary week in this story, with Khelif and Lin Yu-ting of Chinese Taipei guaranteed a medal of some sort having reached their semi-finals (two bronzes are awarded in boxing, in keeping with the sport's most basic code that anyone who gets in the ring deserves something just for doing so).

Both boxers have been at the centre of Paris 2024's most fevered and

bruising extra-sport story, which was aggravated further this week by the chaotic short-notice press conference staged in a Paris hotel by the International Boxing Federation. It was of course the IBA that banned both Khelif and Lin from competing during the world championships last year on the basis of swab and blood tests that suggested neither was qualified to take part in the women's event.

Khelif and Suwannapheng entered the arena at 10.25pm. There was an odd circularity to this Olympic semi-final – of course, because this is now high drama – as Khelif versus Suwannapheng was in effect a rematch of the world championship bout, won by Khelif, that preceded her disqualification.

Suwannapheng had beaten the reigning gold medallist and favourite Busenaz Surmeneli on her way here. She has blistering foot speed and was in and out of range to good effect early on, coming in behind Khelif's jab.

Khelif was the taller boxer with a



▲ Imane Khelif (right) is awarded the win against Janjaem Suwannapheng

Richardson refuses to cry foul after close semi-final loss

Ewan Murray
Roland Garros

At the home of the French Open tennis event Lewis Richardson was denied in the equivalent of a three-set thriller. As the lights came on for boxing at Court Philippe-Chatrier for the first time, so they went out on Team GB's involvement here.

Richardson will have to settle for bronze in the men's 71kg category after losing on a split decision against Mexico's Marco Verde. Normally the domain of aces and volleys, now it was time for jabs and hooks. Richardson gave as good as he got.

Boxing judges would cause controversy during a meditation class. The five in place here scored 3-2 in favour of Verde in round one. In the second Richardson took the spoils 4-1. The final round felt keenly contested yet all five judges opted for Verde. The Mexican was the boxer who looked to be playing for time as the clock ticked down. Richardson refused to cry foul.

"It was close," the Colchester man

said. "It was a close bout. It is hard to say whether I am happy or disappointed with my performance but I am proud of how I conducted myself throughout this tournament.

"I have been ultra-professional and have done my best to represent my country with pride and honour. I hope the country are happy and proud with what I have achieved. Although I lost tonight, I will be able to bring a bronze medal home.

"I felt like I won the bout but I am not screaming about a robbery because it was close. He was a good opponent, seeded number two in the tournament. I thought I had done enough but it wasn't meant to be. I am resilient, will come back stronger and believe I have an exciting future."

But where? Logic would suggest Richardson, 27, will now remove himself from the amateur code with lucrative opportunity sure to come his way. He did nothing to dismiss the

greater reach. She likes to keep her distance and tag her opponent with the jab or come in with the long right. It was messy at times, all flailing arms and bumping in the clinches, but Khelif took the opening round 10-9 on every card.

Roland Garros has taken over from the North Paris Arena business park complex as the venue for these finals, which is a bit like moving from a cheerful old clanky National League ground to the Augusta National Golf Club. It is a wonderful space, every soft touch surface beautifully turned, the roof creating a boisterous echo chamber, but also a sweat-box effect that left trainers fanning their charges with towels between rounds.

Suwannapheng needed to get closer in the second, but struggled to evade the jab. Khelif reeled off a couple of powerful uppercuts and never really came under enough pressure, taking it by the same score.

Suwannapheng had no choice but to up her work rate and get closer in the third, but by now Roland Garros was in a state of pre-celebratory uproar, every combination cheered. A standing count for Suwannapheng shortly before the end drew a whooshing wave of noise. As the decision was announced Khelif wagged her finger and strolled around the ring, then returned to do a knees-up style dance of joy.

Afterwards she was once again assailed by the gathered global media in surely one of the most fevered Olympic boxing mixed zones ever staged, stopping this time to talk to Algerian TV, looking calm, unmarked and delighted to have progressed this far. For reasons that stretch far beyond the distribution of a feather-weight gold medal, that final really is going to be quite an event.

notion but is entitled to take time to ponder his future. "The clear transition usually is into the professional ranks," he said. "It has been a busy year so I would like to go home, rest and recuperate with everyone who has supported me. I also want to celebrate the bronze medal."

Sporting context must be applied. In a disastrous start for Team GB's boxing division five of their six fighters lost in the opening round. Richardson steadied the ship and, to an extent, will prevent the asking of awkward questions over the state of British amateur boxing.

In the gold medal match Verde will face Asadkhuja Muydinkhujaev of Uzbekistan after the latter saw off the USA's Omari Jones. Muydinkhujaev displayed a range of punching and stern defence that suggests Verde will endure a tough final. As ever, it will all depend what the judges think. Or, more pertinently, what they say.



◀ Lewis Richardson goes on the attack against Mexico's Marco Verde before eventually losing out
DAVID LEVENE/
THE GUARDIAN

High jump

Mahuchikh finds solace and glory in eye of storm

Rushed out of her country after Russia's invasion, Ukraine's Olympic champion is returning home to Dnipro

Jonathan Liew
Paris

In between jumps, Yaroslava Mahuchikh returns to her bench, crawls under a sleeping bag she always brings with her into the arena, rests her head on her backpack and lets her eyes drift closed. She lets her thoughts wash over her. Sometimes, she opens her eyes and stares up at the night sky. In the cauldron of an Olympic final, among a crowd of 80,000: this, ironically, is the only place Mahuchikh can find peace.

She doesn't actually fall asleep. "But I close my eyes," Mahuchikh says. "I have a camping blanket that's cool for any temperature. It can be hot or cold and it will be good. It's my relaxation before jumps, trying to think only about jumps, noticing how I feel comfortable."

Certainly there is precious little peace available to her here, in the packed La Villette folly Ukraine have made their base for the Olympics. The room is packed with photographers, journalists and dignitaries from all over the world, and all of them want a piece of the new high jump gold medallist: a selfie, an autograph, an interview. There is a glazed, dazed look to her. She's barely slept an hour. Straight after this interview she has to return to the stadium to collect her medal.

There is precious little peace available to her back home. She comes from Dnipro, in the centre of Ukraine, a city of one million in the good times but considerably fewer than that now, a city still under constant shelling by Russian missiles. Friends and family keep her updated with the latest news. Rocket attacks are conveyed to her on the family WhatsApp group.

"I'm now 22 but I feel that a lot of things happened to me," she says. "Every time there is a rocket attack I think I can lose my parents, my family. Unfortunately a lot of children are now without parents."

"We live in the 21st century. We have technology, we have liberty, the world is moving forward. We should be travelling and exchanging experience, but we can't do it because we need to fight for our country."

Asked what she misses most about Dnipro before the war, Mahuchikh says: "Good memories



Yaroslava Mahuchikh is calling on Ukraine to 'fight until the end'

with my friends. It's where we grew up together. The coffee. Dnipro is the capital of coffee, a lot of cafes.

"And I really miss the atmosphere when people could be happy. Because every time you're happy now, your mind comes back to the soldiers who lost their lives, who left their families to protect us."

Dnipro is where she discovered her love of athletics. She first came to track and field when she was seven and tried everything she could find: hurdles, jumps, throws. But soon it was the high jump that began to consume her. "I liked the feeling of lightness," she says. "After the youth world championships in Kenya, where I won, I got that this was my work, my passion, and I wanted to win a gold medal someday."

The day the Russians invaded, Mahuchikh grabbed as many of her belongings as she could find, stuffed them into her car and left. From a nearby village, the Ukrainian athletics federation sought a route to get her out of the country. The drive to Belgrade took more than three days, incorporating detours and roadblocks, distant explosions and the faint ring of air raid sirens. She now trains in Portugal, having also made her home in Germany, Estonia and Belgium over the past couple of years.

Now into its third summer, the war feels as inexorable as ever. For those of us removed from its horrors, there is an understandable sense of helplessness, perhaps even a kind of paralysis in the face of this endlessly repeating tragedy. So – you know – what can athletes tangibly do, beyond offering Ukrainians a little fleeting levity? What can the rest of us do?

"We talk with international media, that's really important," Mahuchikh says. "We try, like every Ukrainian, to donate, to help people, to buy something for our army. And the United Kingdom has really helped us. A lot of Ukrainians have come there."

"Every country should unite. The war started in 2014 with Luhansk and Donetsk and now they say we can stop the war if we give them territory. It's not possible. We should fight until the end."

So it is for Mahuchikh the athlete, whose campaign is not yet over. She has three more meets this year, including the Diamond League final in Brussels in September, and then a long winter training block. First, though, home. "I'm looking forward to come back to my own city, to see my family and friends and celebrate this gold medal with them," she says.

Pole vault

'It's a strange sport but so special ... kind of a circus event'

Olympic champion Duplantis on his world record, pushing the limits of his exotic event and enjoying morning pizza

Nick Ames
Paris

Mondo Duplantis has wound his way up a carpeted staircase, passing under chandeliers and all the delicate trappings of a gorgeous 18th-century villa near Musée d'Orsay. He is clutching an espresso and is mildly apologetic for sounding so croaky. Around 14 hours have passed since the stunning jump, a world record, that garnished his Olympic pole vaulting title and it is fair to say he has not slept for many of them. There have been childhood friends to party with and several months of intense dietary discipline to fleetingly cast aside.

"I was able to have some fried chicken last night and then pizza probably two hours ago, honestly," he says at a half-whisper. "So we are off to a good start." This might be the morning after the night before but Duplantis has earned the right to kick back. The world has cottoned on to the fact he is a phenomenon, so utterly brilliant at a compelling, bizarre discipline that nobody really comes close.

"The competition is probably the best it's ever been, the level is very high," he says. "I just happen to be jumping at a little bit of a higher level than them. I think everyone else is doing their job quite well, I'm just jumping really good."

His clearance of 6.25m was a full 30cm higher than that of the silver medallist, Sam Kendricks.



▲ Duplantis enjoyed a late night after winning his Olympic gold

What does it feel like when you are swinging into the night sky, hanging in the air and then swooping down to an enthralled reception from 80,000 punters? "Everything happens so fast, it's like my body just takes over in the moment. You're in a state where everything just flows naturally."

"It's crazy. I think last night, that specific moment, I'd visualised it thousands of times. I can remember so many times being in my parents' back yard and visualising that bar being at the world record and it's the Olympic final."

It has become common currency among athletes: the notion of manifesting, of dreaming the thing you want to be. Ollie Watkins, the England footballer whose goal sent them to the Euro 2024 final last month, spoke about a similar approach. When things come off this spectacularly, it is all very well.

"I close my eyes, take a deep breath and then just picture it in my head, the jump that I want to happen," says Duplantis of his thought process when he first clasps his hands on the pole. "It doesn't always go like that but I think you get a much better chance if you can picture it in your head. I think that kind of positive mindset, visualisation, manifestation, is very important to make it happen."

Pole vaulting has its moment in the sun thanks to a 24-year-old with beguiling, doe-eyed star quality. In Sweden, which the Louisiana-born athlete represents owing to his mother's nationality, the usual diet of Monday night football was cleared so television channels could focus on the pole vault. He is protective of his sport, hoping people embrace its quirks while appreciating the all-round accomplishment involved in mastering it.

"It's a strange sport I guess," he says. "I'm probably a bit biased but I don't think there's anything that's more entertaining than pole vaulting. It's exotic, it's kind of a circus-level event and it's so special."

"I think people probably don't understand that you still have to be a real athlete to do what we do. You have to be fast and you have to be strong, you have to pretty much have a combination of everything in order to be top of the top. I hope I can push this sport forward just by doing a good job. I want it to be in the spotlight."

Duplantis's pedigree has become well known. He has athletics in his blood; father Greg a pole vaulter who could jump 5.80m and mother Helena a noted heptathlete for Sweden. Helena's father was a



'I close my eyes, take a deep breath and then just picture it in my head, the jump that I want'

national-level pole vaulter too. A pit was created in their back yard so that the four Duplantis children could practise should they wish to. All of them can more than hold their own but Mondo - full name Armand - would probably find himself at risk if he looked to recreate old times at home.

The husky voice can manage a laugh. "I haven't really jumped there since I was 15 or 16. It would be cool to. But there's the pit and then the neighbours' back wall alongside the pit, so it's a little bit sketchy and doesn't feel that safe to be jumping six metres."

A video of Duplantis's post-victory meeting with Noah Lyles, the men's 100m champion, went viral. They have become two of this summer's stellar faces, winners to inspire a new generation, and it is some company to keep. "What Noah's been doing, the transition from 200m to being the absolute

fastest in 100m is nothing short of incredible," he says. "He talks a big game but he backs it up. We're both in the same corner, just pushing the sport as much as we possibly can."

Fresh, or perhaps not so much, from pushing the boundaries it is time to enjoy more of the uninhibited diet he has been craving. He will retrace his steps through this property, given over to the Olympics' timekeeper Omega for these few weeks, and join his family for lunch. The next challenge will come around soon enough but, at the same time, could not appear further away. Thoughts of the future can wait.

"Why would I think about anything else right now other than enjoying this moment?" he says. "I always want to get better and do more, so I know motivation is not anything I need to worry about. But right now I'm going to enjoy the heck out of this."

▼ Mondo Duplantis leaps into the history books with another world record

CASTEL FRANCK/SHUTTERSTOCK

'There's a lot of struggles ... we push through silently'

Continued from back page

and those are the things that we unfortunately take for granted ... I feel like there's a lot of struggles there. Everyone doesn't see and we push through silently."

Spendolini-Sirieix, whose father Fred is the maitre d' in the TV show First Dates and is in Paris as part of the BBC's commentary team, had qualified for the final after finishing third in the semi-finals on Monday.

A strong opening dive put her in touching distance of a medal in fourth position but she slipped down the table as the Chinese divers Quan Hongchan and Chen Yuxi, who won gold in the synchronised dive, asserted their dominance.

Quan's first dive was judged to be unimprovable, with a full 90 marks given. A new Chinese word has been created to describe her performances, translatable as "water splash disappearance technique", and it was not hard to see why.

A decent sized pebble would have caused more of a ripple after her first forward dive with three and a half somersaults and the standards hardly slipped in the following four attempts.

Quan and Chen came in first and second positions with North Korea's Kim Mi-rae finishing with bronze. China has now won all five diving competitions in the Aquatics Centre in Saint-Denis.

As her father spoke of his pride in his daughter's performance during the Games, Spendolini-Sirieix was in tears after her final dive, one of the best she executed, and was comforted by her mother at the end.

"My mum told me to just keep smiling and she said she was proud of me and they were here to see me. At the end of the day, that's all I can ask for."

"I'm so happy to be here, to be at the Olympic Games. It's been a really long year and it doesn't take away from my accomplishments. Just missing out on one medal doesn't change who I am. It was just God's way of saying there is more to do and I just give God all the glory."

In the UK and Ireland, Samaritans can be contacted on freephone 116 123, or email jo@samaritans.org or jo@samaritans.ie.

'After Tokyo, it was a really scary time for myself so that's why I treasure every morning'

Andrea Spendolini-Sirieix
Team GB diver

British trio swipe silver as Dutch smash world record

Jeremy Whittle

Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines Velodrome



Team GB’s sprinters took a hard-fought silver medal in the Olympic Velodrome, but were unable to prevent Harrie Lavreysen leading the Netherlands to the men’s team sprint title, with a world-record time.

In a one-sided final, Great Britain’s sprint trio of Jack Carlin, Hamish Turnbull and Ed Lowe, were valiant but powerless, as Lavreysen and teammates, Jeffrey Hoogland and Roy van den Berg led almost from the first bend.

As the Dutch, having already broken the world record earlier in the competition, sped to a world-record time of 40.949sec, Carlin, Turnbull and Lowe could only look on as Lavreysen and his two teammates raised their arms in celebration.

“We had a choice,” the Team GB sprint coach, Jason Kenny, said. “We could put massive gears on and throw everything at it and hope for the best, but in all likelihood the gears we were on, we believed, were the quickest. So we sat down and thought: ‘Let’s just do our ride and go as fast as we can.’

“Obviously, the Dutch are quicker but, if they crack, we’ve got to be close to pick up the pieces. They didn’t, they executed perfectly and they’re in a different league at the minute.”

There was no gap in the armour of the team on the other side of the track and Carlin was first to recognise the scale of Team GB’s achievement.

“As a team, we came and delivered,” he said, before adding that silver was “probably the best we could have done on the day.”

Carlin said: “That Dutch team is in a league of their own. I think we’ve executed three really solid races there and can be proud of that as a team. We knew that we would be up against it

coming into it, but we stuck to our process and stuck to what we wanted from each race.

“Two boys came in without any experience really at this kind of level,” Carlin said of his two teammates. “They’ve really stepped up and I’m proud of them.”

Turnbull said: “We weren’t expecting to fight for gold. We were chasing the bronze, so to get into that gold final, all the stress was off.”

Taking silver, though, did not tell the whole story. Carlin’s presence in Paris had been threatened by injury as recently as April. The 27-year-old broke his ankle when one of the

cranks on his bike snapped, and was left with a race against time to get fit enough for Paris.

The ankle injury, occurring just three months before the Paris Games, left him reeling. “I didn’t really have time to even think about it,” he said. “Straight away I had a rehab plan and I just got stuck into that.”

Once again, records tumbled in the sauna-like conditions of the world’s widest velodrome in Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines, but this time, at least in terms of sprinting, it was the Dutch that led the way. Britain performed at a high level throughout the sprints, beating

Germany in the first round, with Carlin’s flying last lap taking them through to the gold medal race-off. But the scale of their task was quickly evident as the Dutch, spearheaded by Lavreysen, broke the world record for the first time, beating Canada with a time of 41.191.

Carlin, who won silver and bronze in Tokyo, has acknowledged in the past that Lavreysen, gold medallist in the individual and team sprint in Tokyo, may well be the greatest track sprinter in the sport’s history.

In the women’s team pursuit qualifiers New Zealand – eyeing yet another world record with a time of 4:04.679 – plus Italy and Australia led the way. A mere 48 hours after winning gold in the women’s road race, Kristen Faulkner rolled away with USA teammates Chloé Dygert, Lily Williams and Jennifer Valente, to set the second fastest time.

Team GB’s quartet of Elinor Barker, Josie Knight, Anna Morris and Jessica Roberts fell behind New Zealand’s

fastest pace to finish third-best qualifier. Eight teams will go through to the finals today.

The men’s pursuit team were shuffled for their first-round match with Denmark, with Charlie Tanfield coming in alongside Ethan Hayter, Ollie Wood and Ethan Vernon, for Dan Bigham, who revealed that he had crashed in training last Saturday.

With the winners going through to race for gold, the British quartet initially led but by halfway had slipped behind the Danes. In the final kilometre, though, Team GB narrowed the gap and went on to win with a time of 3:42.151, a hair’s breadth short of the world record of 3:42.032.

Australia’s four were even faster and had the reigning Olympic champions Italy on the ropes in their first-round heat, setting a world record of 3:40.730. In the final today, Team GB will face the Australians in the race for gold. It seems almost certain that it will require yet another world record time to secure the gold medal.



Men's team sprint	
1	Netherlands 40.949sec (WR)
2	Great Britain 41.814
3	Australia 41.597
◀ Jeffrey Hoogland celebrates the Netherlands' golden night in the team sprint SÉBASTIEN BOZON/ AFP/GETTY	

Results
Olympics
ATHLETICS
Women: 200m: Final: 1 G Thomas (US) 21.83; 2 J Alfred (Stk) 22.08; 3 B Brown (US) 22.20. Selected others: 4 D Asher-Smith (GB) 22.22; 5 D Neita 22.23
Men: 1500m: Final 1 C Hocker (US) 3:27.65; 2 J Kerr (GB) 3:27.79; 3 Y Nuguse (US) 3:27.80. Selected other: 10 N Gourley (GB) 3:30.88
Women: 1500m: Round 1 - Heat 1: 1 G Tsegay (Eth) 3min 58.84sec; 2 L Muir (GB) 3:58.91; 3 S Ejore (Ken) 3:59.01; 4 G Griffith (Aus) 3:59.22; 5 A Guillemot (Fr) 3:59.22
400m: Repechage Round - Heat 3: 1 V Ohuruogu (GB) 50.59sec; 2 G Vaicule (Lat) 50.93; 3 A Mangione (It) 51.07; 4 E Beer (Aus) 51.65; 5 C Azevedo (Por) 52.04; 6 L Gale (Can) 52.68; 7 E Aguilar (Col) 52.86
FOOTBALL
Women: Semi-finals Brazil 4 Spain 2; United States 1 Germany 0 (aet)
BASKETBALL
Men: Quarter-finals: Germany 76 Greece 63

SKATEBOARDING
Women: Park: Final: 1 A Trew (Aus) 93.18; 2 C Hiraki (Jpn) 92.63; 3 S Brown (GB) 92.31
CYCLING
Men: Team Sprint: 1 Netherlands 40:949; 2 Great Britain 41.814; 3 Australia 41.597
BOXING
Men: 71kg: Bronze medal match: M Verde (Mex) bt L Richardson (GB) 3-2
DIVING
Men: 3m Springboard: Preliminary: 1 Wang Z (Chn) 530.65pts; 2 Xie S (Chn) 509.60; 3 J Laugher (GB) 468.30; 4 J Houlden (GB) 448.20; 5 O Olvera Ibarra (Mex) 444.15; 6 J Bouyer (Fr) 407.30
Women: 10m Platform: Final: 1 Quan H (Chn) 425.60pts; 2 Chen Y (Chn) 420.70; 3 Kim M (PRK) 372.10. Selected other: 6 A Spadolini Siriex (GB) 345.50
EQUESTRIAN
Jumping Individual: Final: 1 S Guerdat (Swi) Ofits; 2 M van der Vleuten (Neth) 0; 3 C Kukuk (Ger) 0; 4 J Epailard (Fr) 4; 5 S de Freitas Barcha (Br) 4; 6 S Brash (GB) 4; 7 M Kuehner (Aut) 4; 8 L Kraut (US) 4; 9 B Maher (GB) 4; 10 M Fuchs (Swi) 4
HOCKEY
Men: Semi-finals: Netherlands 4 Spain 0
CLIMBING
Women: Boulder & Lead: Semi-finals: 1 J Garnbret (Svn) 99.6pts; 2 O Bertone (Fr) 84.5; 3 B Raboutou (US) 83.7. Selected others: 10 E McNeice (GB) 59.6; 19 M Thompson-Smith (GB) 9.8
SURFING
Men: Bronze Final: G Medina (Br) bt A Correa (Per) 15.54-12.43. Final: K Vaast (Fr) bt J Robinson (Aus) 17.67-7.83
Women: Bronze Final: J Defay (Fr) bt B Hennessy (Cos) 12.66-4.93. Final: C Marks (US) bt T Weston-Webb (Br) 10.50-10.33

Football
CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
Third qualifying round: First leg Dynamo Kyiv 1 Rangers 1; Lille 2 Fenerbahce 1; Malmö FF 2 PAOK 2; Midtjylland 2 Ferencváros 0; Qarabag 1 Ludogorets 2; Salzburg 2 Twente 1; Sparta Praha 1 FCSB 1
EUROPA LEAGUE
Third qualifying round: First leg Panevezys 1 Maccabi Tel Aviv 2; Petrocub 1 The New Saints 0
CONFERENCE LEAGUE
Third qualifying round: First leg Noah 3 AEK Athens 1
LOWLAND LEAGUE
Albion Rovers 0 Broxburn Athletic 3; Broomhill 0 East Kilbride 5; Celtic II 2 Gala Fairydean Rovers 2; CS Strollers 1 Berwick Rangers 2; Cumbernauld Colts 0 Gretna 2008 1; Linlithgow Rose 3 Hearts II 4; Tranent 2 Bo'ness United 1
Cricket
THE HUNDRED WOMEN
Old Trafford Manchester Originals 125-4. Oval Invincibles 127-3. Oval Invincibles beat Manchester Originals by seven wickets.
Edgbaston Northern Superchargers 115-5. Birmingham Phoenix 54. Northern Superchargers beat Birmingham Phoenix by 61 runs.
THE HUNDRED MEN
Old Trafford Oval Invincibles 164-8 (SM Curran 68). Manchester Originals 161-7 (MF Hurst 50). Oval Invincibles beat Manchester Originals by three runs.
Edgbaston Northern Superchargers 83. Birmingham Phoenix 86. Birmingham Phoenix beat Northern Superchargers by 10 wickets.
METRO BANK ONE-DAY CUP
Group A Radlett Middlesexv Durham. Match abandoned without a ball bowled.
Group B Scarborough Essex 243-9 (L Benkenstein 68,

R Das 67). Yorkshire 244-7 (JH Wharton 71, Shan Masood 58, DM Bess 53 no). Yorkshire beat Essex by three wickets.
Kobworth Surrey 296-6 (DP Sibley 105, RS Patel 72, BBA Geddes 61). Leicestershire 279 (S Budinger 70, TAR Scriven 55). Surrey beat Leicestershire by 17 runs.
Rugby league
BETFRED SUPER LEAGUE
Wigan 20 16 0 4 525 266 +259 32
Hull KR 20 15 0 5 503 258 +245 30
Warrington 20 14 0 6 504 267 +237 28
Salford 20 13 0 7 377 382 -5 26
St Helens 20 12 0 8 501 262 +239 24
Catalans Dragons 20 12 0 8 375 286 +89 24
Leeds 20 10 0 10 371 364 +7 20
Leigh 20 9 1 10 398 314 +84 19
Huddersfield 20 7 0 13 350 455 -105 14
Castleford 20 6 1 13 336 523 -187 13
Hull 20 3 0 17 274 612 -338 6
London Broncos 20 2 0 18 210 735 -525 4
Wigan 28 Leigh 6
Tennis
WTA NATIONAL BANK OPEN (Toronto, Canada)
First round: M Frech (Pol) bt A Potapova (Rus) 4-6 6-3 6-0; M Uchiyama (Jpn) bt V Tomova (Bul) 7-6 (7-4) 6-2; Wang Y (Chn) bt S Kenin (US) 7-5 7-6 (7-3); M Kostyuk (Ukr) bt T Maria (Ger) 6-0 6-2; E Svitolina (Ukr) bt S Rogers (US) 6-0 6-2; V Azarenka (Rus) bt A Pavlyuchenkova (Rus) 6-2 6-2
ATP NATIONAL BANK OPEN (Montreal, Canada)
First round: L Sonogo (It) bt T Griekspoor (Neth) 7-6 (9-7) 5-7 6-4; K Nishikori (Jpn) bt A Michelsen (US) 3-6 7-5 6-4
Fixtures
Football
Champions League
Third qualifying round: First leg Jagiellonia Bialystok

v Bodø/Glimt (7.45pm); Slavia Praha v Union Saint-Gilloise (6pm); Slovan Bratislava v APOEL (7.30pm)
Conference League
Third qualifying round: First leg Hacken v Paide (6pm); København v Banik Ostrava (6pm); Paks v Mornar (6pm); St Gallen v Slask Wroclaw (7.30pm)
Crick
First Men's Test (first day of five)
West Indies v South Africa, Port of Spain (3pm)
Third Men's One-Day International
Sri Lanka v India, Colombo (10am)
The Hundred Women
Trent Rockets v London Spirit, Trent Bridge (3pm)
The Hundred Men
Trent Rockets v London Spirit, Trent Bridge (6.30pm)
Metro Bank One-Day Cup
Group B Gloucestershire v Sussex, Bristol (11am).
Group A Hampshire v Derbyshire, Utilita Bowl (11am); Northamptonshire v Somerset, Northampton (11am); Worcestershire v Kent, New Road (11am)
Greg Wood's racing tips
Pontefract 2.10 Burglar's Dream 2.40 Sir David
3.10 Gosdend 3.40 Garden Oasis (nap) 4.10 Huddle Up (nb) 4.40 Formidable Force
Brighton 2.25 Wrestling Revenue 2.55 Nelson Rose
3.25 Letter Of The Law 3.55 Charming Whisper
4.25 Three Dons 4.55 Adace
Kempton 5.23 Leyhaimur 5.55 Yaroogh 6.25 Arabian Light
6.55 Radiant Beauty 7.25 Sea Just In Time 7.55 All Agleam
8.25 Heathcliff 8.55 Warmonger
Yarmouth 5.40 Lindwall 6.10 Elizabeth Bay 6.40 Northern
Ruler 7.10 Trackman 7.40 Angle Land 8.10 My Boy Jack



Athletics Women's 200m

Women's 200m



1
Gabby Thomas
21.83sec



2
Julien Alfred
22.08



3
Brittany Brown
22.20

◀ **Gabby Thomas is shocked after her win but it was another near miss for Daryll Neita**
TOM JENKINS/
THE GUARDIAN




Thomas glides to gold as Asher-Smith misses out

Andy Bull
Stade de France

Out in front Gabby Thomas was already raising her hands to her head, overcome with the realisation that she had just this very moment become the Olympic 200m champion. A couple of strides behind her, the new 100m champion Julien Alfred was striding smoothly through the line in second place, and there just a little further back still, came Dina Asher-Smith, Daryll Neita, and the USA's Brittany Brown, shoulder-to-shoulder-to-shoulder in lanes 4, 5, and 6, with just the three-hundredths of a second between them. All three of them were struggling with everything they had for that last extra millimetre that would win them the bronze. It was Brown who got it. So another Games has come and gone for this talented British pair

without either winning an individual medal. Neita finished fourth in the 100m, and was fifth in the 200m, Asher-Smith didn't make it through the semi-finals of the shorter sprint, and came fourth in the longer one. Asher-Smith is 28, Neita 27, and the truth is neither of them will necessarily have a better chance to win an individual Olympic medal. Thomas had been destined to win this race since the Jamaican Shericka Jackson pulled out injured before the heats. Jackson is the second-fastest in history after Florence Griffith Joyner, and the only other woman around capable of turning in the kinds of times in which Thomas has been finishing this season. She won in 21.83sec, a way short of her personal best but only a little slower than her fastest this season. If Asher-Smith had only been able to do likewise and get that close to the 22.07sec she ran in London just last month, let alone her personal best

Medal table

					Total
1	USA	24	31	31	86
2	China	22	21	16	59
3	Australia	14	12	9	35
4	France	13	16	19	48
5	Great Britain	12	15	19	46
6	South Korea	11	8	7	26
7	Japan	11	6	12	29
8	Italy	9	10	7	26
9	Netherlands	8	5	6	19
10	Germany	8	5	4	17

of 21.88sec, she would have been pushing Alfred for that silver medal. Asher-Smith deserved it, given the career she has had. But in this sport, deserving it doesn't matter much. She tried to front-run the final. She was fast through the bend, and in first

place after 50m, but Thomas accelerated coming into the straight, and as she swept ahead you could see Asher-Smith start to strain to chase after her. She could see the race was getting away from her. Alfred overtook her with 50m to go, and then, finally, just 10m out from the finish, Brown caught her too. "I was told to get out and just keep going," Asher-Smith said afterwards, "and if you die, you die." And she did. But she managed a smile, said she was proud of how she had performed, and happy for Alfred, who is her training partner. She seemed oddly ebullient for someone who had just come fourth in one of the biggest races of her career. "I was really proud to have held my own," she said. Neita said similar things. "It has been a fantastic Games for me - a double finalist," she said. Some athletes are happy to make finals. Others are happy to win them. It's the difference between being good and being great. Which Thomas is. Maybe a little too great, if anything. As well as her Olympic gold medal, the bronze she won in Tokyo three years ago, and her assortment of relay medals, she has a degree from Harvard in neurobiology, a master's in epidemiology from the University of Texas and,

when she's not competing, training, talking about black representation, or how to reform her sport, she is volunteering at a not-for-profit medical facility that offers healthcare to patients who don't have medical insurance. She is also just about the friendliest person you could meet. Which doesn't mean you'd want to race her. You don't win that many races if you don't enjoy beating up on the people you're competing against. After her victory in the semi-final, she tried to clap Asher-Smith on the shoulder in congratulations at qualifying in second place. Asher-Smith, who said later that she "ran angry", shot a few short words which are maybe best left to the lip-readers, and marched straight past. Thomas's response was to shoot a mischievous little side-eye grin at the camera that was fixed on the two of them. The 200m runs is a very different discipline to the 100m. It mixes power, speed, technique and endurance. You need to be tactically on-point and technically precise, which is why some of the greatest at it have also been some of the most stylish over any distance: Wilma Rudolph, Marie-José Pérec, Frankie Fredericks, Allyson Felix. Thomas fits right into the lineage. There was a time when you might have said Asher-Smith would do, too.

Hodgkinson plans to target 41-year-old world record

Sean Ingle
Paris

Keely Hodgkinson will celebrate her Olympic 800m gold medal with a holiday before targeting a time that will take her close to the 41-year-old

world record. That is the message from Hodgkinson's coaches, Trevor Painter and Jenny Meadows, the husband and wife team who meticulously prepared the 22-year-old for glory in Paris. They accept Jarmila Kratochvilova's time of 1min 53.28sec is out of reach for now but believe Hodgkinson has the talent and desire to break it one day. "She's going to Marbella on a family holiday," said Painter. "She says she's going there to switch off. Then we'll do the Diamond League final and have a crack there with a pacemaker. "She knows she can run 1.53. The world record is low 1.53, so it might take a few years before we get to that."

Painter, whose 800m athletes do a lot of 200m and 400m repetitions in training, said: "We run numbers. We are very data driven. If you do this in training, it correlates to this. "Keely can deliver it. Some people can't and it translates into nerves and pressure. The London Diamond League [on 20 July] was the same. She was saying I can definitely run 1.54." The highly regarded and popular coaches run the M11 Track Club in Manchester, named after the post-code of Sportcity, with a growing team of athletes including Team GB's 1500m runner Georgia Bell. It does not hurt that Meadows was a brilliant 800m athlete, who would have surely won more than three world

championship medals - one silver and two bronzes - had she not competed in an era of Russian doping. Painter said they met Hodgkinson for lunch before the race to talk tactics. "The British Olympic Association has got a lodge 15 minutes from the village so she's been getting a lift across there to eat because it's a good bit better than the village. She's not eaten a meal in the village." Meadows added: "She was really confident. I spoke to her about a few scenarios that could happen. I said people might start fast and slow the pace. She was just having none of it. 'No, that's not going to happen.'" During the race, the coaches had very different emotions. "I am always quite calm, calmer than Jen," said Painter. "I just have belief." Meadows said: "I was not calm. I wasn't calm because it was slow. I didn't want to face the wrath of Keely if she only, I say only, got the silver again."



▲ Keely Hodgkinson is eager to take aim at the 800m record set in 1983

Kerr powered past his great rival Ingebrigtsen ... but then came Hocker

Sean Ingle
Stade de France



Over the hardest three laps of his life, Cole Hocker clung on with the stubbornness of a mule. Then, in an Olympic 1500m final for the ages, he kicked like one.

It took the 23-year-old American past the fading Tokyo gold medallist Jakob Ingebrigtsen of Norway. Then, in an extraordinary last few yards, Britain's world champion Josh Kerr. And suddenly, and without warning, a 37-1 underdog from Indianapolis had shaken up the world.

Marvin Hagler's extraordinary fight with Tommy Hearns was dubbed "The War". This men's Olympic 1500m final was the track and field equivalent. It was a full-on slugfest almost from the gun, only with a twist that nobody expected.

As Hocker crossed the line in an Olympic record of 3min 27.65sec, Kerr clung on for silver in 3:27.79 - a time that broke Mo Farah's British record. Another American, Yared Nuguse, claimed bronze in 3:27.80. Ingebrigtsen, who had been a strong pre-race favourite, faded to fourth.

"I never thought I had won," Kerr said. "It was electric in there so it was difficult to tell who was around. I told you guys we were going to put

on an Olympic 1500m final that would last for generations and hopefully we did that today."

The tale of the tape beforehand suggested that the 23-year-old Ingebrigtsen had the edge. He was the Olympic champion, the fastest man in the world this year, and last month set a personal best of 3:26.73 - more than two seconds quicker than Kerr and nearly three clear of Hocker.

But the Norwegian also had an achilles heel: his sprint finish which Kerr had exploited in beating him to world championship gold in Budapest last year. Ingebrigtsen knew he had to change tactics. And there was no hanging about as he launched an attack after just 100m in an attempt

to set his opponents' legs and lungs on fire. The first 400m came and went in 54.82sec. The 800m mark was in 1min 51sec. The pace was so crazy it was quicker than when Hicham El Guerrouj set his world record in 1998.

"The big thing today was always going to be: weather the storm early," said Kerr. "I thought: 'He is going to try and pull us into deep waters early and see who could survive.' I had to take a few punches."

With 600m remaining Ingebrigtsen was about five metres clear of Kenya's Timothy Cheruiyot in second, with Kerr a couple of metres back in third. But by the time the bell rang the Briton was closing. It led to a thrilling last lap, with Ingebrigtsen being stalked by Kerr, Hocker and Nuguse as Cheruiyot fell back.

First Hocker tried to strike on the inside, only for the Norwegian to block him off. Then Kerr attacked and took the lead. For a moment, a golden horizon awaited him. But Hocker had enough in his legs to deliver a final gut-punch. The numbers showed that the American had run the final 300m in 39.6sec - off a brutal pace.

"It's an unbelievable feeling," Hocker said. "I just felt like I was getting carried by the stadium and God. My body just kind of did it for

Men's 1500m		
1	Cole Hocker	
	3min 27.65sec	
2	Josh Kerr	
	3:27.79	
3	Yared Nuguse	
	3:27.80	

me. My mind was all there and I saw that finish line.

"Winning gold was my goal this entire year. I wrote that down and I repeated it to myself even if I didn't believe it. My performances showed me that I was capable of running 3:27, whatever it took. I knew I was a medal contender, and I knew that if I got it right, it would be a gold medal."

But you had to feel for Kerr too. Such was the determination to win Olympic gold in Paris that he ran twice on Christmas Day, eight miles in the morning followed by another three after a heavy dinner.

Over the past few months, the 26-year-old had also leaned out like a boxer making weight - with every



meal and training session geared towards 8.50pm local time on 6 August 2024. He really could not have done any more.

"At 600m to go I felt I had quite a lot left and coming off that last bend I got pushed out a bit," he said. "I was able to come round Jakob but there is a lot of running left at that point. It is so difficult to keep track of everything that is going on in the last 100m."

Afterwards Kerr denied he had spent too much time focusing on Ingebrigtsen, their bitter rivalry leading to so many eyeballs on this contest. And while he did question the Norwegian's approach, he did so with respect. "It was a brave strategy and it didn't quite work but it made for a great race," he said.

Meanwhile Hocker admitted that all the talk before had played into his hands. "I kind of told myself that I'm in this race too," he said. "If they let me fly under the radar, then so be it."

As for Ingebrigtsen, he conceded he may have pushed the pace too hard because he felt so good at halfway. "I can only blame myself. It's a difficult game, balancing your energy. This was a risk I was going to take."

It led to a thrilling and unpredictable ride. Just not the result either he or Kerr ultimately wanted.

Analysis

Jonathan Liew *Stade de France*



◀ Josh Kerr and Jakob Ingebrigtsen after missing out on gold last night
MARTIN MEISSNER/AP

American takes inside track to break duopoly that existed only in a tiresome war of words

A humble statement, on behalf of the media and the entire athletics establishment. In light of the surprising events at the Stade de France on Tuesday, we wish to make a few minor clarifying amendments to some of the coverage you may have seen over the last 12 months.

For example, when we described the Olympic men's 1500m final as a head-to-head showdown between Josh Kerr and Jakob Ingebrigtsen we should of course have pointed out these two men would end up finishing second and fourth. When we thrust microphones in front of Kerr and Ingebrigtsen and asked them to take pot shots at each other, we in fact misspoke when we actually meant to be asking them both to trash talk Cole Hocker.

When World Athletics put out a TikTok asking users whether they were #TeamKerr or #TeamIngebrigtsen, an administrative error meant that the third option of #TeamHocker was inadvertently omitted from the content. When the Olympics website published a story that "the competition is between the two fastest runners in the men's 1500m" this should, of course, have come with the caveat that someone else could easily run faster. We apologise for any confusion these understandings may have caused.

So: about that rivalry. Which until the last 80m of this dazzling, breathtaking Olympic final was still basically intact: Kerr of Scotland and Ingebrigtsen of Norway the gravitational centre around which this race was revolving, just like everyone had predicted. Ingebrigtsen with the endurance, Kerr with the speed. Ingebrigtsen taking an early lead and slowly trying to ratchet up the pace from

afar; Kerr content to stay within touching distance, the field slowly and unevenly stringing out like a poorly made spaghetti.

Finally, as they rounded the final bend, we were going to get some answers. Some closure. And of course this has been a long, confected and at times faintly tiresome war of words between two men who were never as far clear of the field as they both liked to imagine. Kerr accuses Ingebrigtsen of being surrounded by yes men. Ingebrigtsen claims he could beat Kerr blindfolded. Kerr claims Ingebrigtsen has no manners. Ingebrigtsen calls Kerr "the Brit who never competes".

Of course we all lap this stuff up, because on some level we have internalised the idea that athletics is in a parlous state and needs to be sold, to be projected, to be coated in chocolate sprinkles and presented almost as a consumer product. The Kerr-Ingebrigtsen rivalry reliably sold tickets and fattened television audiences. It may even have kept some people in a job.

And it turns out this stuff has actual, real-life racing consequences. Consider: pretty much every time Kerr and Ingebrigtsen have had a microphone thrust in front of them for the last year, there has only

If neither of them have bought into the pre-race hype, why do they leave a huge gap for the bloke with the monster kick?

really been one main topic of conversation, and both of them have happily gone along for the ride. Every single impulse and stimulus - media, commercial, competitive - has been encouraging them to think of this race as a two-way duel. Kerr was boasting as early as January that he had already visualised how this race would pan out. Well, it's fair to say he didn't visualise this.

Because let's rewatch the last 300m of the race, knowing what we now know. Hocker is fifth at the start of the final lap. On the back straight he moves past Yared Nuguse and Timothy Cheruiyot into third place.

To a roar, Kerr moves on to the shoulder of Ingebrigtsen with about 250m to go. Meanwhile, Hocker moves up on to the shoulder of both, and I'd be surprised if 1% of the television audience watching at home noticed.

Round the final bend, Ingebrigtsen takes a look up at the big screen, and then another. I'm not sure this was a great idea.

Because at that point he drifts into lane two to try to block off the path of Kerr, who has anticipated this and is coming around the outside of that lane. They're still both stubbornly racing each other. So here's the rub. If neither of them have bought into the pre-race hype, then why do both of them leave a huge gap down the inside for the bloke with the monster kick?

It turns out one person did call this. And fair play to Big Red on the LetsRun.com forum, who predicted: "Jakob and Kerr get a wee gap on the last lap. Hocker's midnight-express kick mows 'em down for the gold." And perhaps the main dissenting voice to the Kerr-Ingebrigtsen duopoly came from the United States, warning that in Hocker and Nuguse they had two rapidly improving runners who had looked ominous in qualifying, if only anyone had been looking.

Perhaps there is a lesson here for all of us: in the power and fallacy of narrative. This is, after all, the most competitive and volatile of events, a function not just of speed or endurance, but luck and tactics and sometimes blind opportunism.

An hour later, Hocker stepped on to the podium to receive his gold medal. He didn't look stunned or overawed. He looked like he belonged there. Turns out he was the one with the vision all along.

'This road isn't over. It makes me hungry and ready for more'

◀ Continued from back page

to see off the 23-year-old Hocker, who slashed almost three seconds off his own fastest time. "This road isn't over, I really wanted it today," said Kerr, who improved on his bronze from Tokyo. "It makes me hungry and ready for more."

Ingebrigtsen took the blame for his own performance and admitted he had made a tactical failure in setting out too fast. His strategy towards the end did not work, either; appearing to try forcing Kerr wide but seeing Hocker and the bronze medallist Yared Nuguse ease past.

"I felt extremely good and that's why I pushed the pace a little too hard," said the Norwegian, who admitted he was surprised to look up and see he had run the first lap two seconds quicker than planned. "I saw that I got a starting gap, and I was a little bit eager. Of course, it's not what I was hoping for. I can only blame myself."

The rivalry with Kerr was, he claimed, irrelevant to how he assessed the race. "It doesn't mean that much. What was important was that I spoiled the race for myself."

Kerr would not deny his opponent had got it wrong, saying his absence from the podium was little surprise. "If you're going at sub-world record pace without a pacemaker it's a bold strategy. Obviously he went out a little too hard, you could see in the last 200m that he was looking around to see if we were still there and we were. It was a brave strategy and it didn't work out today but it made for one heck of a race."

Hocker, who finished sixth in Tokyo, suggested the focus on Kerr and Ingebrigtsen had worked to his advantage. "The headlines were about them and rightly so," he said.

"It can be nice to fly under the radar as much as I can. I think people in the face knew I was a competitor. It was another thing not to have that noise and I think I took advantage of it."

The Glaswegian Neil Gourley, who finished 10th, said he had expected the winner to come from outside the Ingebrigtsen and Kerr pairing.

"I think everybody assumed it would be one of those two guys because of what's happened in recent years," Gourley said. "But from an athlete's point of view you pick up on certain things people do in certain races. Maybe it was partly the noise but I think it was more analysing what Cole has done recently."

'The headlines were about them. It can be nice to fly under the radar'

Cole Hocker
1500m winner

Hocker strikes late to pull off upset

Cole Hocker outlasts Josh Kerr and the chasing pack on the home straight to win 1500m gold in Paris
CHRISTIAN PETERSEN/GETTY



So near, yet ...
Asher-Smith
and Neita both
pipped for
200m bronze



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Quick silver
British trio's
pride at second
place in cycling
team sprint



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The Guardian
Wednesday
7 August
2024



Sport

Hocker shocker Kerr beaten at the last in epic 1500m

Sean Ingle and Jonathan Liew Pages 42-43 →



Paris 2024

► Cole Hocker takes the acclaim of the Stade de France crowd after surging past Josh Kerr and Jakob Ingebrigtsen to win 1500m gold
FABRIZIO BENSCH/REUTERS

Nick Ames
Stade de France

Josh Kerr said the pre-race noise around his rivalry with Jakob Ingebrigtsen had no bearing on the shock outcome of an extraordinary 1500m final in which he finished with a silver medal.

Kerr set a British national record while the favourite Ingebrigtsen, considered to be Kerr's only realistic

opponent for top honours in a hugely anticipated clash, went out too quickly and faded to fourth.

The American Cole Hocker arrived from nowhere to take gold but Kerr, who briefly looked favourite to win in the back straight, did not want to blame his high-profile enmity with Ingebrigtsen for the result. The expected two-horse contest failed to materialise in what became a finale for the ages; but Kerr had no regrets.

"The storylines are going to be

the storylines," he said. "Comments will be made over the next couple of days. But this is an intense atmosphere, we're only getting to do this every four years. I wanted to come away with a medal that could put me top in the world. I wasn't able to do that but I'm consistently showing up at these championships and putting together performances I can be proud of. That's the best I've got."

Asked whether he had spoken to Ingebrigtsen since the race, he

replied: "I shook his hand but that was about it, I know that he would have been disappointed with today."

Kerr posted a time of 3min 27.79sec in a thrilling showdown. "I said what my goals were, it was pretty obvious but I put a performance out there today that I was extremely proud of. I focused on my controllables, I ran the best and the fastest tactical 1500m I have ever done in my life."

It was enough for a personal best but not sufficient

Team GB diver Spendolini- Sirieix 'happy to be alive'

Daniel Boffey
Aquatics Centre

The British diver Andrea Spendolini-Sirieix spoke of being happy to wake up at all on the morning of her diving final after a period of poor mental health, as she missed out on a second Olympic medal.

The 19-year-old diver, who won a bronze last week in the synchronised 10-metre platform with Lois Toulson, came sixth in the individual final yesterday, but Spendolini-Sirieix said her tears on leaving the pool had not been in response to her performance.

"So I woke up this morning, and like, the first thought that I had was: 'I'm happy that I woke up,' and that's just how it's been for a long time," she said. "I'm just grateful to be alive and to have this experience and to be here with my family."

"I'm genuinely not upset about my performance and I'm not upset about where I came. My competitors did better than me today. It just means that I've got a lot more that I need to do."

Spendolini-Sirieix, who was the youngest diver on the Team GB roster in Tokyo having qualified at the age of 16, had told of wanting to leave the sport after that Games but she had not previously disclosed the depth of her unhappiness.

"Three years ago I didn't even want to be alive, so today I'm just happy that I am alive, I'm breathing and I've got my family to support me ...

"After Tokyo, it was a really scary time for myself so that's why I treasure every morning, because it's like my eyes have woken up."

"I've got breath. I've got food on the table. I've got water in my cup, and I've got a roof over my head. So, you know, sometimes the Olympic medal isn't everything. We've got other things, so we really should be more thankful

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The GB diver Andrea Spendolini-Sirieix finished sixth in the 10m platform final in Paris

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